"Let Us Alone! Give Us Everything!" An Editorial

NEW MASSES

DECEMBER 21, 1937 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

Rolling Our Own Logs

by

Congressman Henry G. Teigan

★

MEXICO:

"Fascism Shall Not Pass"

by

Charles Wedger

★

Notes from Arkansas

by

Robert B. Duncan

The Meat Trust Defends Womanhood

by Robert Moore

Oil for the Invasion of China

by S. Tyme

Pablo Picasso as a Spaniard

by Jay Peterson

"Ralph Fox: A Writer in Arms"

Reviewed by

Harry Carlisle

Mary Colum's "From These Roots

Reviewed by

Joseph Freeman

Forsythe's Page

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BETWEEN OURSELVES

LAST week we announced that we had lost five hundred subscribers in Canada because of a ban on the NEW MASSES there. Subsequently our distribution agents in Toronto took this matter up with the federal authorities of the Post Office of Canada and were notified that there was no ban on the magazine to their knowledge. The ban had been imposed by local post office authorities. The NEW MASSES is again being sold and distributed throughout Canada as before.

An evening of non-concert music extraordinary in its diversity will take place on Sunday evening, February 6, at the St. James Theatre in New York, under the auspices of the NEW MASSES.

An unusual feature will be the active participation of the following composers: Marc Blitzstein, Paul Bowles, Elliott Carter, Aaron Copland, Carlos Chauvez, Alex North, Earl Robinson, Wallingford Riegger, and Virgil Thomson. Assisting artists will include Anna Sokolow and Mordecai Bauman. Count Bassie and his famous band will be on hand to play some of the finest swing music to be heard anywhere.

The program will include Marc Blitzstein's famous radio piece *I've Got the Tune* and Aaron Copland's *Second Hurricane*. Ballet music will be represented by Elliott Carter, Paul Bowles, and Virgil Thomson. The composers will perform their own works.

Anna Sokolow will dance to the music of Alex North and Carlos Chauvez. Wallingford Riegger's dance music will be performed by a well known dance group. Watch next week's NEW MASSES for further details on this evening of overwhelming interest and importance. Reservations can be made by calling CAledonia 5-3076. This is one NEW MASSES event you cannot afford to miss.

What's What

THE appearance of the first number of our literary supplement is still being hailed by our readers, some of whom write to us with unrestrained effulgence. Carroll Hollister writes that when he read it he "had that warm glow that comes to you once in a while in the midst of the struggle, when you . . . feel the warmth of mass emotion, clarified and directed by a keen and steady Marxist understanding, unified by a common purpose, and kindled to anvil heat in the forge of a collective will—call it the thrill of belonging, and being proud to belong, knowing that you are a part of the unconquerable force of history and the future victory of all humanity, under the leadership of the working class. . . . Bravo to the NEW MASSES, hail to the movement that can produce such writers and such a magazine! You know that it can't be beat, and that it *will* win." And to do his bit Mr. Hollister is writing off a loan he made to the magazine as his contribution to the supplement.

Correspondent Gilbert also writes in fighting terms. He sees the NEW MASSES as a battling champ. "He is young and has a great future ahead of him. He had led many good fights in the past, but tonight [after reading the supplement] he has convinced me that he has the making of a real champ—the champ of the people, the champ of the working-class movement on the cultural front. . . . Boy, what a wallop he has!" Gilbert liked Edwin Rolfe's story of el Campesino because he is convinced that "the generals that will lead the world out of the mess we are in, are just the generals that are rising out of these class struggles. Men who know who is the enemy of humanity and strike straight from the shoulder." Ethel Saniel thinks Hyde Partnow is a find.

But not all our readers have unmixed praise. Armin Shuman, for instance, can congratulate us on only 50 percent of the supplement, and thinks the editors occupied altogether too much space. "Whose supplement is it?" this reader wants to know.

A parenthetical comment made by Michael Sayers in his review of *The Ghost of Yankee Doodle* (issue of December 7) that the Theater Guild is now being picketed by its workers, has brought us a protest from the Guild which urges the NEW MASSES to examine the facts. This the NEW MASSES has done. The facts show that while the Guild is not being picketed by its employees, the Theatrical Managers, Agents, and Treasurers, affiliated with the A. F. of. L., are picketing the theater. The T.M.A.T. informs us that they have just obtained an agreement providing for the employment of union members in the Belasco Theatre and in four other houses under the same management. The union also has signed agreements with the Mercury and other New York theaters. The Guild, long an advocate, as Mr. Sayers has pointed out, of "free speech, free politics, and free art—and, of course, free business," is resisting the A. F. of L. organizing drive with the old, old excuse that it refuses "to force" its workers to organize, and therefore refuses to recognize the T.M.A.T.

The artists' and writers' committee of the Medical Bureau, a subsidiary of the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, has just published a striking Christmas card which contains a Goya reproduction on the cover and *Mediterranean,* a poem by Muriel Rukeyser, which first appeared in the NEW MASSES. The card and envelope may be purchased directly from the committee, at 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City, in as large a quantity as desired.

A typographical error has been pointed out to us. In Theodore Draper's review of *Japan in American Public Opinion,* (issue of December 7) the Twenty-One Points presented by Japan to China have been dated as of 1905. The correct date is, of course, 1915.

Who's Who

HENRY G. TEIGAN, who makes his NEW MASSES debut in this issue, is a Farmer-Laborite representative to Congress from Minnesota. . . . Charles Wedger is the NEW MASSES regular Latin American correspondent. . . . This issue sees the second article on the meat trust by Robert Moore. Mr. Moore is an economist who has had intimate contact with the meat-packing industry. . . . Robert B. Duncan is a former college professor who taught at the southern workers' school referred to in his sketch. . . . Harry Carlisle, author of *Darkness at Noon,* has just completed a national organizational tour for the League of American Writers. . . . Boris Gamzue, who has long been associated with the New York theater, is an instructor at the Washington Square College of New York University. . . . Arnold Shukotoff is secretary of the newly established New York college local of the Teachers' Union and an instructor at the College of the City of New York. . . . Hy Kravif is a member of the staff of the Labor Research Association. . . . Clarence Weinstock is managing editor of *Art Front.* . . . S. Tyme is a research associate on the staff of a large mid-western university.

Flashbacks

THE first real act of self-government in America took place in the cabin of the Mayflower before the Pilgrims landed on Cape Cod, December 21, 1620. These men, who believed in holding property in common and in sharing the proceeds of labor, made a compact of their own free will to form a government and obey it. . . . One hundred years later (December 17, 1830) Simon Bolivar, liberator of South American provinces from Spanish rule, died. . . . On the shortest day of the year 1879 in a hovel, in Gori, Georgia, a son Joseph, was born to shoemaker Djugashvili and his handsome wife. Joseph, now surnamed Stal[illegible] week is fifty-eight. . . . Ja[illegible] Ford, Negro Communist leac[illegible] born in Pratt City, Ala., D[illegible] 22, 1893.

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The NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists. Manu- id drawings must be accompanied by stamped and self-addressed envelope.

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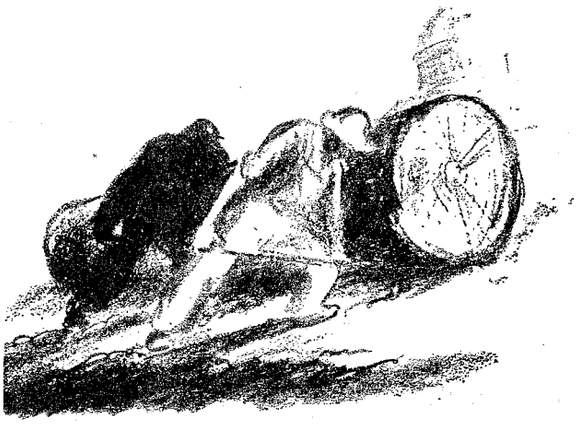
NEW MASSES
DECEMBER 21, 1937



Fred Ellis

Rolling Our Own Logs

By Representative Henry G. Teigan

"FARMERS and workers are both members of the producing class. Both are exploited by organized wealth, and an injury to one is an injury to the other." In those words a North Dakota farmer once described to me the economic situation as he then saw it. It seemed strange, though interesting, to me at the time, but as time passed on and I began to delve into books on economics, this farmer's view began to look like a prophecy.

Thus it is not altogether a coincidence that a farm bill and a bill regulating wages and hours in the interests of industrial workers should be up for consideration in Congress at the same time.

On December 2, members of the House of Representatives were debating the farm bill, otherwise known as the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1937. But while we talked about farmers, we were worrying about workers. Eight signatures were still needed to release the wages and hours bill from the stranglehold of the Rules Committee. Eight signatures and only forty-eight hours to go.

Everybody now knows what happened: the two hundred and eighteenth signature to the petition to discharge the Rules Committee at long last set the House free to consider a measure which already in the last session had the support of a clear majority. When the last name was appended to the petition on the Speaker's desk, the House broke into spontaneous applause. That applause was echoed by thousands of trade unionists throughout the country, and by thousands of poorly paid workers still unorganized.

In that session on December 2, something happened which was of historic importance to American workers and farmers. The fight for the farm bill and the fight for the wages and hours bill had become one. "Log rolling! Horse trading!"—so the gentleman from New York, Mr. Hamilton Fish, charged.

When the House convened at noon, Mr. Fish introduced a resolution calling for an investigation of charges that "everything has been swapped but the Capitol." The gentleman from New York, moreover, called the newspapers on what Mr. Dies of Texas and Mr. Robertson of Virginia had said.

The terms "log rolling" and "horse trading" do not sound good to the average American's ear. In years gone by, it has meant the trading of votes in Congress by the gentlemen of big business in their efforts to improve their methods of plundering the people. Now the so-called "log rolling" and "horse trading" was being done by members from rural districts and those from industrial districts. That is to say, the workers' representatives and the farmers' representatives were getting together in their common objective to get away in some measure from the plundering of organized wealth. The reactionaries in and out of Congress were appalled, shocked, and amazed at the unholy performance. They "had never seen anything like it before."

It was quite true, they never had. Old hands at barter, accustomed to seeing the rights of workers and the rights of farmers gambled away in a series of "trades" that benefited only their common enemies, they *were* seeing something new under the old capitalist sun. They were seeing the practical beginnings of farmer-labor unity.

It wasn't a "trade" that won votes for the farm bill and signatures for the wages and hours bill. It was united support for two measures inseparably important to the welfare of those who till the soil and turn the wheels of industry. Without some kind of farm aid, workers would lose a large part of their rural market. Without a floor for wages and a ceiling for hours of work, farmers would feel the burden of "surplus" food which workers had no money to buy. It wasn't workers against farmers and farmers against workers, each trying to drive the sharpest bargain. It was workers and farmers together against the profits of trusts and middlemen. It was workers and farmers against the very voices which shouted "horse trading."

MINNESOTA is a Farmer-Labor state, and so this question of coöperation between farmers and workers is not a new one to our congressional delegation. We have been watching the country for signs of its growth. And we have seen the signs. There was the convention in Denver last summer, where cannery, agricultural, packing, and allied workers, including the sharecroppers formed the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America. There was the statement of John L. Lewis, addressing himself to the working farmers:

> The working farmers of America have a great stake in the C.I.O.'s crusade to raise the level of living of the working people of this country. . . . Only when the industrial workers, steadily marching toward higher standards of living, can buy the farm products they need, will the farm problem be solved.

Labor, organ of the railroad brotherhoods and other railway organizations, has for years championed the cause of the farmers in their fight for legislation at Washington. And in Minnesota, the entire trade-union movement, including the state federation of labor, has consistently supported legislation in the interests of the farmer.

Farmers have responded warmly to the prof-

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fered friendship of organized city workers. In Oklahoma City, the Farmers' Union at its recent convention expressed support for the workers in their struggle for a decent living, while preparing to engage in a similar struggle in the interests of the toiling farmers. In South Dakota the other day, a conference on progressive legislation brought together representatives of both farm and labor groups. In Montana, in Pennsylvania, in Alabama, the Farmers' Union conventions have helped to break down the boss-made barriers which too long have separated farmers and workers.

On October 4 of this year, Governor Benson called the Minnesota Farm Conference at St. Paul, to which flocked more than one thousand of Minnesota's dirt farmers. The conference program states the case:

> In Minnesota the farmer and the worker have cooperated to win many victories. The practice should be extended to the whole nation, for the cure for agriculture's ills must be brought about mainly on a national scale. Propaganda of the big newspapers and others trying to show that the farmer and worker have little in common should be promptly exposed. Figures show that farm income rises with income of the industrial worker, and vice versa.

These were some of the straws that showed us that the wind was blowing from the direction of growing farmer-labor unity. It takes quite a breeze out through the country to stir the air in Congress. But in this special session, for all its efforts to stifle the popular voice, the air is beginning to stir with fresh currents. The merging of the farm bill and the wages and hours bill into one issue—the issue of all the people against their oppressors—showed that this is true.

Farmers and workers put the heat on. That's why the wages and hours bill was dragged away from the Rules Committee and why the farm bill passed. It was a new kind of heat. Workers plugged for farmers, farmers plugged for workers. That was the kind of heat they put on me. Nine farm organizations from six states wrote me, urging support of the wages and hours bill. They said:

> We deplore and condemn any attempt to divide the forces of farmers and labor. We particularly condemn attempts to make it appear that farmers are opposed to federal legislation establishing minimum wages and decent working standards.

Governor Elmer A. Benson of Minnesota sent me a telegram on the pending bill. I cherish that telegram because it expresses the philosophy of a great statesman, a governor who serves a Farmer-Labor state by fully representing the interests of all its people. In part Governor Benson's telegram said:

> The community of interest of farmer and wage earner makes it imperative that both groups and their congressional representatives work in the closest coöperation. I urge that you do everything possible to prevent predatory interests who oppose both farmers and wage earners from creating friction and discord in farmer-labor relationships.

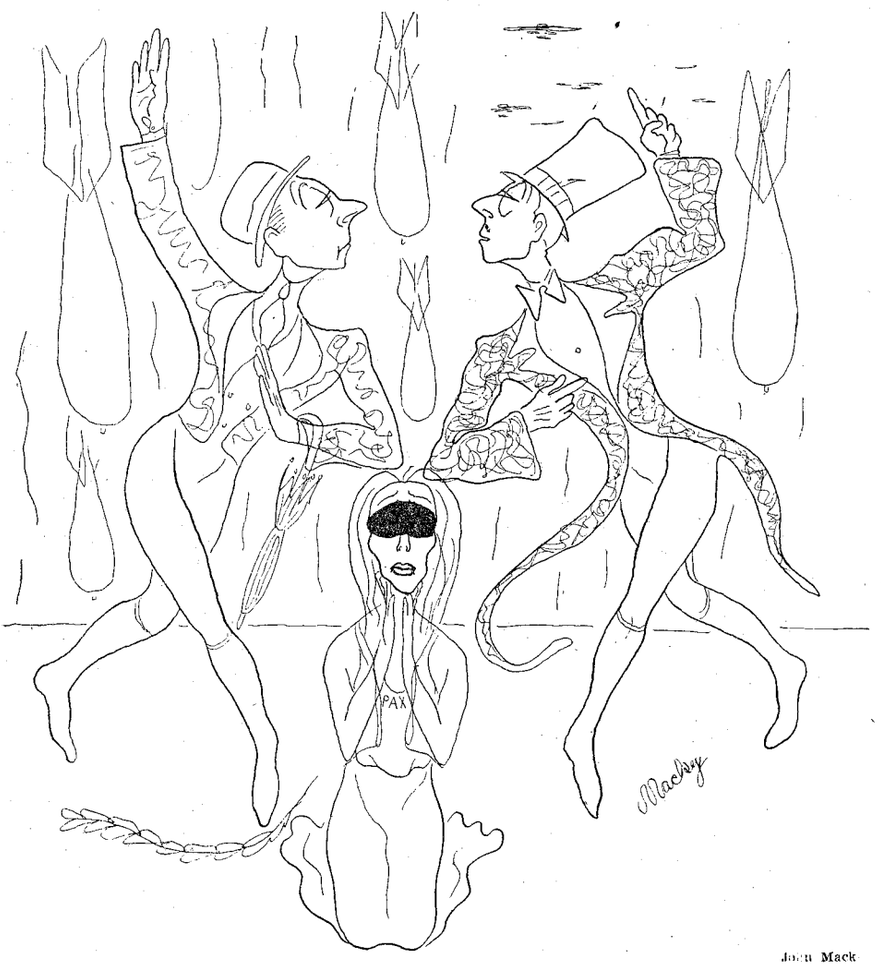
That was the kind of heat the folk back home put on me. It's the kind of heat that warms a Farmer-Labor congressman's heart. It's the kind of heat that must radiate from every part of the country if we are to defeat the attacks now being made on the living standards of the whole population.

FARMER-LABOR unity is on the way, but it isn't here yet. Passage of the wages and hours bill and of a real farm bill which—which I fear won't happen at this session—will represent a victory for the beginnings of this unity. Full unity, with the incomparably greater strength it would bring to our whole people, could achieve far more than these inadequate measures. For, just as unity is now only embryonic, the farm and labor bills for which we struggle are only half measures which fall far short of the people's need. The farm bill, in addition to its faults of complexity and administrative difficulty, perpetuates the philosophy of scarcity and destroys food while millions hunger. Its benefits will not filter down to the lowest strata of farmers, and the old inequities made familiar by the A.A.A. will still oppress sharecroppers and tenants. The wages and hours bill excludes millions of needy and underpaid workers from its benefits.

Obviously, these bills do not "solve" the economic problems of our country. Solution must wait on the maturity of that coöperation between workers and farmers, between town and country, which has just begun to flower. Unity must broaden as well as deepen before we can press on to more complete solutions of our problems than are contemplated by this Congress. Small businessmen and professional people must join with workers and farmers awakening to the common dangers which threaten us all.

Meanwhile, there are other things to be done first. Progressive groups throughout the country have the task of nurturing and strengthening the lusty infant of farmer-labor unity. Their success will help us in Congress to carry out the President's legislative program, to stop threatened relief cuts and budget balancing. Our small victories will, in turn, stimulate the drive for greater unity outside of Congress. The release of the wages and hours bill, won during farm debate, should provide a lesson for any who doubt that it is unity which decides.

Our enemies called it log-rolling and horse-trading. But this collective action of workers and farmers had nothing in common with the shady transactions of slick politicians. Workers and farmers made, not a trade, but a partnership. No wonder the tories lamented and deplored. They never saw anything like it before. But they are going to see more of it in the time to come, and the more they see the less they'll like it. It isn't horse-trading. It's putting your horses in double harness and driving a team. It's the way to get places. Workers and farmers are on the way.



John Mack

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE BALLET

British Foreign Policy

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IS LATIN AMERICA GOING FASCIST?—IV

Mexico: "Fascism Shall Not Pass"

By Charles Wedger

JOHN REED found the Mexican revolution of the Pancho Villa days an exhilarating, confusing, heroic, and bewildering affair. Today, the Mexican revolution still marches on, but it is more clearly defined and better disciplined as a movement than in Reed's days. You do not have to be a sensitive poet to grasp its meaning or to be infected by its vigor and enthusiasm. Courage, strength, and vision have infused the land. Visit Mexico today and, like John Reed, you will return home in a mood for work and heroism.

But there is also that other Mexico, today as in Villa's day. It is a Mexico of privilege, conspiracy, and corruption. It is the old Mexico, not content with the strides of the new. It is prepared and is further preparing to put up a bloody struggle to preserve itself and its social roots. It possesses formidable weapons—tradition, an old, established culture, and enormous financial resources. In addition, Mexican reaction, though it has no mass following, has the support of Wall Street which owns most of Mexico's national resources and big industries, including an investment of $175,000,000 in oil alone. And it counts on the help of the fascist triple alliance which is reaching out for strategic positions in the new world.

The native reactionaries already have their backs against the wall. They must attack in full force or very soon be hopelessly crushed. During the past three years of the Cárdenas administration (he has three more to go), twenty-five million acres of land have been expropriated, among them whole regions of the most valuable farming territory in the republic, such as the Laguna in north central Mexico, one of the best cotton-producing areas anywhere, and the Yucatan, in the southeast, one of the world's important henequen-growing districts. Both of these regions, moreover, have been organized into collective farms, the largest outside of the Soviet Union.

Labor is relatively more powerful in Mexico than anywhere else in all the Americas. The open shop has almost ceased to exist, and while foreign imperialism is still reaping fabulous profits at the expense of the extremely low wage level of Mexican workers, the latter, of whom seven hundred thousand, or 90 percent of all organized labor, belong to the Confederation of Mexican Workers, show every sign that they have only begun their battle for a just share of what they produce.

As in the agrarian program, the Cárdenas regime is also applying certain socialist reforms in the field of industry in order to increase

Bertrando Valloton

Cárdenas of Mexico

national production. This is not surprising, however, since Mexico's industrial revolution has been delayed so long. A National Labor and Industrial Development Bank was set up in September to supply credit for workers' coöperative factories. The bank has already permitted the Laguna collective farmers to purchase some large industrial equipment, such as an electric power plant, a small railroad, and machines to extract cotton-seed oil. It may well become an important factor in preparing the way for a future Mexican industrial democracy.

AGAINST these maturing achievements of the new Mexico, a plot is being hatched which would make the land another Spain. This reactionary offensive is developing rapidly and at the present time takes form in the following characteristic ways:

(1) An intense propaganda drive. The big metropolitan press, 100 percent reactionary, lashes out hysterically against the government, labor unions, and the Communist Party. It plays up Franco and, as much as it dares, Hitler, Mussolini, and Japanese "civilization." Scores of lesser sheets and pamphlets frankly call for the assassination of Cárdenas and others, and incite rebellion.

(2) The hierarchy of the Catholic Church, which puts out some of these pamphlets itself, backs up the printed propaganda from many pulpits and, in addition, offers divine sanction for "righteous" murder.

(3) The coördination of dozens of conservative, reactionary, and unconcealed fascist organizations, such as the outlawed Gold Shirts, the Employers' Center, Middle-Class Federation, National Civic Action, Mexican Catholic Youth, the so-called Social-Democratic Party, etc., into a solid anti-democratic front.

(4) The more or less open resistance of several state governors to the agrarian expropriation laws, notably the governors of Sonora, Chiapas, and San Luis Potosí. The governor of San Luis Potosí, General Saturnino Cedillo, was forced out of the Cárdenas cabinet three months ago. He is now generally assumed to be the military and political chief of the counter-revolution, and though ten thousand troops of his private army have been recently disarmed through a clever move by Cárdenas, himself a soldier, Cedillo is still boss of his state, where he is storing munitions and rebuilding his army under cover.

(5) Increasing use of terror by roving gangs of hired gunmen against peasant leaders and villages which have received land expropriated from the feudal plantations. Probably one hundred or more were killed and wounded during the past four months, including twenty-five in the state of San Luis Potosí alone. One of the victims was a deputy in the National Congress.

(6) The big financial interests are attempting to engineer an economic panic despite the fact that business has never been better in Mexico. American and British oil companies, notorious for their intervention in Mexican affairs, have publicly threatened to refuse to abide by regular legal procedure in settling a six-month dispute with their workers. This open flouting of Mexican sovereignty is backed by news items in the American press calling for a stern attitude by Washington and probably supplemented by secret pressure on the Cárdenas regime through diplomatic channels.

(7) Close connections between Nazi agents and all seditious activities. Nazi ships unload arms in Guatemala whence they are smuggled across the border into Mexico. Guatemala, a feudal-military dictatorship on cordial terms with Germany, may try to play the role of Portugal if civil war breaks out.

THE FASCISTS, desperate as they are, are quite sober when they plan to unleash civil war in Mexico. Mexico is a menace to the spread of fascism. Nor is a large-scale fascist uprising inevitable in Mexico, and should it come, might be quickly defeated if the Mexican people and their government take sufficient precautions beforehand. Mexico still needs to take firmer steps to crush its enemies before they are ready to strike, but Mexico, it is quite certain, will not be caught napping like Spain. Whatever else may happen, anyone

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who witnessed the twentieth-anniversary celebration of the Soviet revolution knows that in Mexico *fascism shall not pass.*

The meeting, called by the Confederation of Mexican Workers, took place in the government's Palace of Fine Arts, a huge, glittering, pompous marble structure erected many years ago to glorify the vain and decadent dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz.

Inside, the contrast between the purpose of the meeting and the setting was striking. All of the three thousand, red-plush seats were occupied by workers dressed in their best Sunday denim, pajama-clad peasants from the outlying villages, small shopkeepers, office employees, school teachers, and doctors. The exclusive boxes overlooking the stage and the over-decorated balconies bulged with perspiring humanity. People jammed the aisles and doorways.

Banners hung over the railings, hiding some of the colored marble and gilded finery. Many were red and black, others pure crimson, and in bold letters they carried the names of trade unions, the Communist Party, Unified Socialist Youth, Friends of the Soviet Union, and other organizations. On the platform the million-dollar, Tiffany glass curtain had been raised, revealing a score of men and women prominent in public life, seated at a long table. For the backdrop, a poster covering the entire length of the stage had been set up. It represented an enormous map of the Soviet Union out of which emerged the giant figure of Lenin, painted in bold relief, bareheaded and with outstretched arm, as if he were about to step onto the platform and address the audience.

Some of the speakers, like Lombardo Toledano, general secretary of the Confederation of Mexican Workers, and Valentín Campa, noted Communist leader, had already been on this platform together on similar occasions, both of them lucid, brilliant orators standing shoulder to shoulder in defense of the great proletarian state. Nevertheless, their speeches were especially impressive on this day. When Campa attacked the plottings of Trotskyism and then presented the unparalleled achievements of the Soviet Union as an example to revolutionary Mexico; when Toledano declared that the working class of the world must stand solidly with the Soviet Union in defense of democratic rights and liberties or else play directly into the hands of the fascist international, the cheers which greeted these words were deafening.

There were two other speakers, however, who revealed the special and indeed historic significance of this occasion. Narciso Bassols, until very recently Mexico's ambassador to Great Britain and its delegate to the League of Nations, made a powerful plea for the immediate resumption of normal diplomatic relations between Mexico and the Soviet Union. Coming from Bassols, who is close to official circles, this plea had more than a personal importance.

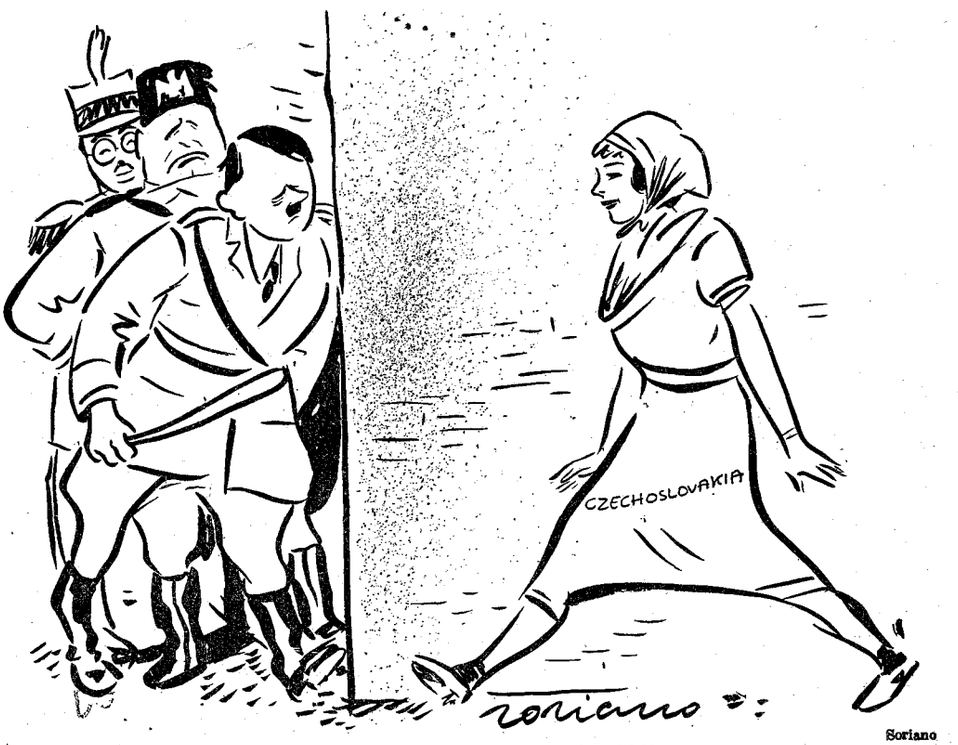
Strange that Mexico and the Soviet U[nion] which have so much in common, espe[cially] during the last year and a half when they have been the only countries in the world whose governments have wholeheartedly supported the Spanish republic against fascist aggression, still have not repaired the damage done in 1930 when the Calles dictatorship, in connivance with the Hoover administration, broke off relations with Russia. This is one of the incongruities, like the presence of Trotsky, which at first makes it difficult to understand the Mexican situation and to appreciate the fact that, though Mexico is not a socialist state, it is undeniably the most progressive country in the Americas.

Bassol's stirring address was a clear sign that the Mexican government is becoming fully aware of its responsibilities toward international, and especially inter-American, anti-fascist solidarity. The speech of Molina Betancourt, representing the National Revolutionary Party, was an even more important indication of growing anti-fascist realism on the part of the government. It is the first time that the National Revolutionary Party, the party of President Cárdenas and the only political machine of any importance in Mexico today, has participated in such an event.

Señor Betancourt not only paid tribute to the Bolshevik revolution, but spoke of the necessity of converting the National Revolutionary Party into a genuine people's-front party. The relations that now exist between the National Revolutionary Party and the leading workers' and peasants' organizations already constitute a loose, informal people's front, though in some respects a more effective one than the French Popular Front. The presence of Betancourt on the same platform with Campa and Toledano, his praise of the Soviet Union, and his warm, earnest message to the Mexican people were symbols, concrete and eloquent, of a new level of Mexican political consciousness. They were, in effect, an urgent call by Mexico's government for invincible unity.

However, in judging the temper of the contemporary progressive movement in Mexico, it would be a grave error to label it as socialist. Mexico is primarily attempting to fulfill a bourgeois, national democratic revolution, that is, to destroy its near-feudal system of agriculture and change its status from that of a semi-colonial country to a truly independent state. This must be accomplished by distributing feudal land-holdings to the peasants and by largely doing away with foreign ownership of mineral wealth and the chief industries. In this process, however, both the peasantry and the workers make tremendous gains, since the radical middle class, radical because it is also anti-feudal and anti-imperialist, must depend on their support to win its objectives.

The international, and especially the American, position of Mexico is a dangerous one for world fascism. Mexico is not only prepared to defend itself, but its remarkable accomplishments stand out as an example for the enslaved peoples of Caribbean, Central, and South America. Anti-fascist Mexico is like a beacon of light constantly illuminating the dark wastes of Hispanic America. Exiles pour into Mexico City from almost all the Latin American countries, incidentally making the city one of the important international centers of culture, like Paris, Moscow, and New York. And now plans are under way, spurred by the disastrous events in Brazil and the impending tragedy in the Argentine, to hold a Latin American anti-fascist congress in Mexico City in order to unify the struggle of the Hispanic peoples of the new world against their common enemy.



"It's your turn again, Adolf."

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Picasso as a Spaniard

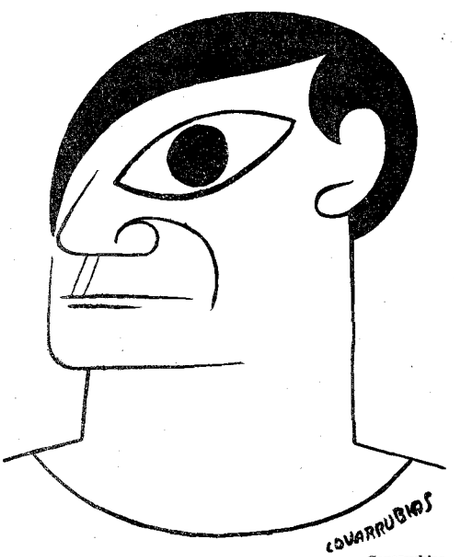
By Jay Peterson

PABLO PICASSO lives in Paris, but he comes from Spain. And the painter's speech to the Artists' Congress in New York this week, as well as his actions in recent months, underlines as never before the importance of the fact that he is a Spaniard. When, for example, the fascist revolt began in July 1936, he almost immediately contributed two million francs to the republican treasury. Again, when the Spanish Pavilion was inaugurated at the Paris Exposition this summer, one of the sensations in it was the immense mural—*Destruction of Guernica*—which the painter had donated to his government. In addition, he has issued a special folio of etchings, entitled *The Dreams and Lies of General Franco,* the entire proceeds of which will go to loyalist Spain. His outright gifts of money alone are now said to be in excess of five million francs.

In the past, however, it has frequently been forgotten that Picasso was a Spaniard. For one thing, it was customary to think of him in connection with the School of Paris. The two, indeed, were practically synonymous. Furthermore, he continually seemed to lead the stream of fresh invention—whether cubist, abstract, or surrealist—which has proceeded from the French capital since the early days of the century. Dealers, collectors, and audience alike have abetted this confusion, and some critics have even tried to maintain that his Spanish origin was irrelevant. Recent events have corrected this view. They have shown that Picasso is a great human being. Thus they have provided us with a new key to his art.

Picasso was born in Málaga in 1881, and he was barely nineteen when he first went to Paris in 1900. The next year, following a short visit to Spain, he had his first Paris exhibition. It contained race-track scenes, female figures, souvenirs of Spain, bull-fight pictures. Some of the Parisian subjects recalled the bitter and fastidious Toulouse-Lautrec, while some of the Spanish "memories" were reminiscent of El Greco. But Picasso's airiness, his young tenderness, his fantasy, were unlike anything in Lautrec, while his tremulous line and his intellectual emphasis differentiated him from his seventeenth-century influence. Thus began his so-called Blue period.

His difficulties at the time were great. From 1900 until early in 1904 he was constantly shuttling between Spain and Paris; there seemed to be no foothold for him in the foreign city. At times he burned drawings to keep himself warm. Once he would have sold everything he had done for two hundred francs. Is it any wonder, then, that he pictured the poor, the miserable, the beggarly, the starving? None of these people have had



Covarrubias

Pablo Picasso

enough to eat. They live in a blue world—colder than the light cast up from the snow in winter. At the same time, there is an elusiveness in them; the line which traces their emaciated figures is the transposition of a sensibility which shivers in the slightest wind; and the color, individual and fine and exact as it is, always comes back to that tone of fundamental blue.

Early in 1904 the younger painter finally settled himself at the Rue Ravignan, where he remained until 1909. By 1905 his color had become more diversified, though he was still chiefly attached to blue. His figures, too, had changed: they were no longer merely integers of suffering so to speak, but specific acrobats, strong men, adolescents, foreign ballerinas. The common feature of these circus types seems to be that they are all moving; they have not established themselves in their world. In the chief canvas of this period, *Les Saltimbanques* of 1905, they definitely express the pathos of the evicted. But they are distinguished from the hopeless prostitutes, gamblers, and degenerates of Lautrec by their élan. There is something youthful in them. It should also be noted that harlequins appear now and again, figures for which there was no counterpart in the immediate background. They had been familiar to the painter since his childhood in Spain.

At twenty-six, with his reputation already partly founded, he suddenly rejected an easy future in favor of cubism. In other words, he had been hit by African Negro sculpture. This pursuit of essential form, which involved almost complete abandonment of color (so as to encounter no distractions), catapulted him farthest in the years 1910-13. By this time the more far-sighted dealers and collectors had recognized his preëminence. But they came to him, not he to them.

Picasso, of course, did not participate in the World War. It was a quiet period for him. Toward its end he visited Italy, and saw Pompeii, Rome, and Florence. His Monumental or Classical period, dating from about 1920, sprang in part from these new influences. It also reflects his marriage of two years before, as he frequently portrays the large, lovingly playing figures of his wife and child. But his Spanish roots must not be forgotten, either; for these productions likewise related to archaic works are still found in some of the Iberian caves.

It should not be thought that Picasso restricted himself to works of this order. He has never had an *idée fixe.* Sometimes he would revert to pure cubism. One of his finest canvases of the twenties, for example, is the large *Trois Masques,* of 1921, which has a note of exaltation amidst animal terror, to the accompaniment of glorious color. Some of his great still-life harmonies, done as abstractions, are unforgettable too. At such moments, when he is going beyond the problem, when he has surpassed his intellect, when passion grips his material and shapes it without regard to his volition, he is at his best as a painter and without a peer among his contemporaries.

Finally there appear the directly social works of the last year. They remind us that Picasso is of the land of Goya. They are wiry, bitter, stinging. They ridicule Franco with his larva head, pupa nose, curly mustache, and unstable legs. Never is he recognized as human. The progenitor for this is Goya, both in technique and approach. For he, too, exaggerated, stabbed evil, and portrayed nightmares.

In each period, then, Picasso has been incessantly curious, restless, various. Possibly he is the most inventive painter who ever lived. Sometimes this very inventiveness seems to indicate an unwillingness to recognize his own hospitality to sentiment. He seems sometimes to be afraid of his own emotion. It is when feeling takes hold of him, and has its own way, therefore, that he is most memorable: in the poor souls, touching, delicate, half-singing, of the Blue period; in the tremulous nudes and harlequins of the Rose period; in some of the battered, stripped, essentially Negroid forms of his early cubism; in some of his facet portraits a little later; in the glorious summations of the twenties. Picasso is sure of an immortality as an alphabet, blue-print, and pathfinder in one. But when he is carried away, he is something more: he is a purifying fire and, like his Spain of today, is a creator of heroic new forces in the world.

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NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

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The Sinking of the "Panay"

THE sinking of the U.S.S. *Panay* while on a mission of mercy twenty-five miles from Nanking is an instance of fascist frightfulness appalling in its implications. Indeed, the Japanese militarists also seem to have been appalled—for their own reasons. The incident strikes them as highly inopportune in the midst of their strenuous campaign to win over American public opinion. But more than an apology is at stake.

For this is but a small sample of the frightfulness turned against innocent Chinese men and women, driven from their homes and slaughtered as they flee. For them there are no apologies. The extermination of the Chinese is but the means whereby Japanese imperialism seeks to gain undisputed rule over Asia and eventually over the world. This aim cannot be fulfilled without world war, a war certain to drag us in. The *Panay* sinking will be adjusted, but its fundamental causes will remain.

The only cure for such incidents is peace in the Far East. The only way to put a halt to aggressions against the United States is to put a halt to aggression against China.

This can be done only by coöperative action on the part of Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. The United States is in a position to take the initiative along a course which would withdraw our present aid to Japan and our hindrances to the defending Chinese. We are still selling precious oil to Japan, without which, as an article in this issue shows, the war cannot go on. But airplanes for China were not delivered because Japan threatened to confiscate them. We have an obligation both to ourselves and to humanity to get these policies reversed.

Turning Point in China

THE determined defense of Nanking would tend to confirm the assertion by T. V. Soong, president of the Bank of China and Chiang Kai-shek's brother-in-law, that China has decided upon a protracted war. If so, it is also likely that Nanking is the last of the great frontal struggles of the conflict. Henceforth, chief reliance will be placed on guerrilla warfare, a type of defense that demands least in armaments from the Chinese and most in economic resources from the Japanese.

Unquestionably, the struggle for Nanking marks a turning point in the war. Every such military crisis brings about a political realignment. Those who would surrender or compromise are sloughed off in favor of those who will fight to a finish. There is some indication that the Japanese are experiencing difficulty in finding a traitor suitable to head a puppet government. Hallett Abend, the New York *Times* correspondent, cabled from Shanghai on December 10: "It is significant that in inner military circles the leaders of China's former Communist armies were said to be rising to prominence rapidly." If so, a victorious though prolonged war is assured. Victor Keen, the New York *Herald Tribune* correspondent, has reported that a Communist was in joint command of the Nanking defense.

The Soviet Elections

ACCOUNTS of the elections in the Soviet Union last Sunday agree that they took place in a holiday atmosphere, that they were beautifully organized and carried through without a hitch, and that they represent the greatest endorsement of a social and governmental regime ever recorded in the world's history. Estimates of the total vote vary, but ninety million seems a fair guess. When ninety million voters have the opportunity of entering polling booths under conditions of guarded secrecy, and recording their opinion of the system of society under which they live, that would seem to be a pretty substantial example of democracy. The question that has been warming the cables is, what kind of democracy?

Those who ask the question, with an implied criticism of Soviet democracy as something inferior to bourgeois democracy, have failed to grasp the central point that in the Soviet Union there are no classes. The three main groupings—workers, peasants, and intelligentsia—are differentiated by occupation, but not by conflicting class interests. All these groups are loyal to the socialist system which releases the creative energies of all, protects all, and rewards all to the extent of their contribution. According to the conception of bourgeois democracy, it should be possible for an industrial worker, a collective farmer, or a professor in a Soviet university to declare himself a candidate for the Supreme Soviet on a platform of a return to capitalism. According to the realities of everyday life in the Soviet Union, this would not be democracy but whirling idiocy. Socialism exists in the Soviet Union, its victories are secure and visible on every hand. The elections were held for the purpose of selecting the best people of the land to carry forward these victories.

How can the best people become known, except by their works? In the jungle fight of capitalism the "best" man is he who has downed everyone else and climbed to eminence on the tallest pile of defeated competitors. In the Soviet Union the best citizen is he or she who has helped the most people, who has spread knowledge furthest, who has inspired the most fellow-workers in the great task of building a socialist society. The worth of these leaders becomes known first to those who work side by side with them, and who bear testimony to their achievements by word of mouth and in the innumerable wall newspapers that are such unique and characteristic organs of public opinion in the Soviet Union. From there the fame of outstanding workers spreads through the mass newspapers, until they are known everywhere. Thus it is not surprising that in the nominations of candidates there should have been few contests that were not settled by the withdrawal of candidates who realized they were second or third in public esteem.

Now the ninety million Soviet voters have spoken, and endorsed the Soviet system. Against this roaring chorus of affirmation, and on the same day, there arose here a shrill squeaking of the Trotskyites, represented by the tragically misled John Dewey. The fantastic theory that the Moscow trials were a "frame-up" was dragged out and ventilated once more. With the hearty coöperation of the capitalist press, the Trotskyites made their usual gesture of enmity toward the Soviet Union. Dewey's broadcast the following night was adequately answered by Corliss Lamont, chairman of the Friends of the Soviet Union. But the complete answer had already been given by ninety million Soviet voters, speaking for the 170 million Soviet citizens.

Still Divided

THE *Nation,* commenting on Granville Hicks's analysis of its book-review policy, says that it has not "deliberately selected anti-communist reviewers for books dealing with communist policy or the U.S.S.R.," but has "deliberately chosen non-communists." What the facts show is that it has chosen—if not deliberately, then with remarkable consistency—reviewers who

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claim to be in some sense communists but are opposed to the Communist Party and the Soviet Union.

"What earthly end," the *Nation* asks, "could be gained by inviting 'a party spokesman,' as Mr. Hicks proposes, to review books on communism and allied subjects?" What Granville Hicks proposed was that, since communist books were being given to anti-communists, some anti-communist books should be given to communists.

The *Nation* talks about "intellectual trade barriers" and "totalitarian camps," and says that communists are "biased" and therefore "untrustworthy as critics." It does admit that it has some difficulty in finding its "unbiased" critics, but it fails to acknowledge that at one time it regarded communists as trustworthy and that at the moment a number of journals, some less ardent in praise of liberalism than the *Nation,* seem willing to depend on communist reviewers.

We are rather gratified by the *Nation's* editorial, for it seems to suggest, in however begrudging a fashion, that the book section will do better in the future. We hope so, and the editors can be sure that, if it doesn't, we shall again call the matter to their attention and that of their readers.

Perhaps we should begin now, with the current issue. Five anti-communist books—three of them by Trotsky—are reviewed together. The reviewer, who reaches here a new high in virulent enmity toward the Soviet Union, is Edmund Wilson. The appearance of such an attack on the Soviet Union, in the same issue in which the *Nation* cautiously promises to mend its ways, is striking additional confirmation of the correctness of Granville Hicks's analysis of "A *Nation* Divided."

A Gift to the Nazis?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAM E. DODD was never popular in Germany. He denounced violation of treaties, praised democracy and peace, supported President Roosevelt's reform of the Supreme Court, and opposed sending a representative of the U. S. Embassy to the fascist war-mongering fete at Nüremberg. He was unpopular with the German fascists who knew his abhorrence of their methods and their aims.

Hugh R. Wilson, a career diplomat, has been named his probable successor. For years Wilson has been associated with just such apologists for fascism as Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles, formerly our ambassador to Cuba. The State Department, with its clique of reactionary career men, trained Wilson just as it trained Jefferson Caffery, now ambassador to fascist Brazil. These career men have in the past shown a decided sympathy for a pro-fascist diplomacy. To represent American opinion accurately at Berlin, Mr. Wilson would need to turn his back on a "yes-man" attitude to fascism, and be guided by the policy outlined on October 5 by President Roosevelt at Chicago: for peace, against aggressor nations, for collective action and a quarantine of the aggressors, for the sanctity of treaties, for democracy and against fascist dictatorship. Otherwise he would be a most valuable gift from the reactionary bureaucracy of the State Department to the Nazis.

Farmer-Labor Unity

DECLARING themselves in favor of independent political action but wisely deferring the formation of a new political party, delegates from both A. F. of L. and C.I.O. unions in New Jersey held their first convention last week under the auspices of Labor's Non-Partisan League. Pledged to call another convention within the next six months, their next step is to enlist farmer as well as middle-class support to ensure a broad progressive movement in the state which has seen civil liberties canceled by the reactionary machines of Democratic Mayor Frank ("I Am the Law") Hague and Republican Governor Hoffman.

In this issue of NEW MASSES, Representative Henry G. Teigan discusses the encouraging response in Congress to just such progressive political alliances as that which is growing in New Jersey. The victory in bringing the wages and hours bill out of committee was, of course, not entirely due to pressure from labor and farm organizations. The supporters of this move represented parliamentary rather than farmer-labor unity.

The real test of farmer-labor strength which will form the basis of an American people's front will come in the congressional elections of 1938 and 1940. Success then will assure not only true unity in Congress, but progressive majorities in state legislatures. In that event, it will no longer be necessary to salvage at great cost beneficial legislation from such reactionary blocs as the present Rules Committee, or suffer the abrogation of all civil liberties by such reactionary martinets as Mayor Hague.

Is Poetry Dead?

"IT is essential for an artist," wrote Van Wyck Brooks, "to feel that he is needed; it is natural for him to wish to be needed and to wither when that support is withdrawn."

The creator's relation to his audience, long the theme of academic discussion, became a matter for public debate in Toledo last week. George A. Gullette, instructor of English at the University of Toledo, made the headlines when he pronounced the death of poetry. "Poetry is dead," declared Mr. Gullette. "It has no mourners, because nine out of ten persons never knew it was alive, and the other one refuses to recognize its demise. . . . American civilization is active, virile, and extravert; poetry has no place in it."

Mr. Gullette's "premature obituary" was immediately protested—by Albert Shepard, field representative for the C.I.O. in Toledo. The union organizer challenged the university instructor to a debate on the subject of "Poetry: Dead or Alive?" Mr. Shepard said the debate could be held as soon as he returned from organizing work in Columbus and Detroit.

In his defense of poetry, Shepard pointed out that the only dead poets were those who were obsessed with images of death and decay because they had lost all touch with the vigor of the American people.

I have seen workers in hundreds of union halls listen intently to Carl Sandburg's *The People, Yes.* They come after hard hours of work to listen to Langston Hughes and Paul Engle and Genevieve Taggard. The rebirth of the American labor movement has accompanied a rebirth of poetry in the tradition of Whitman. It is a poetry that talks the language of the people. And the people gather eagerly to hear it. The workers, who made America so "virile" and "active" a country, feel that poetry does have a place in their civilization. But it must come out of its wastelands and its tired intellectual towers; it must wander into the factories and the movies and the hamburger joints; it must know the sorrows and joys of the picket-line; it must learn the rhythm and vivid imagery of everyday conversation.

Here is the framework of a discussion which should be welcomed by every poet and reader of poetry in the country. Who is right, Mr. Gullette or Mr. Shepard? If Americans are reading poetry, what kind do they like? If certain poets are reaching large audiences and others are not, what is the explanation? What do you, readers of the NEW MASSES, think about poetry today? We should like to have you write and tell us.

And what about the poets? Are you conscious of this audience to which Mr. Shepard refers? Do you want your poems to be read in C.I.O. halls? For whom are you writing and what are you trying to say? We should like to hear from you, too.

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"Let Us Alone!"

An Editorial

THE living core of labor's program is the desire for security. Security based on fundamental rights: the right to live, the right to work. Strikes, picket lines, demonstrations, organizing campaigns, the very idea of collective action—all arise from this basic need. Workers and farmers alike have seen to what depths of misery they can be driven by the unrestrained operations of monopoly capital. From 1929 to 1933 they hungered and froze, while factories stood idle, food stocks glutted the warehouses, and private capital of the Hoover school said nothing, did nothing, and could think of nothing to improve conditions. The lesson of those terrible years burned deeply into the consciousness of the people, and from it arose the determination that somehow, in some way, the insane gyrations of capitalism must be controlled.

A measure of control was instituted, through the New Deal. The benefits went largely to the capitalists, but some accrued to labor. When the salutary effects of President Roosevelt's Court reform proposals had begun to operate on the Supreme Court, and the Wagner Labor Relations Act had been validated, labor found a weapon in its hand—the right to organize, to bargain collectively, had at long last been established on a legal basis.

The instant response of labor sent an electric thrill of hope through the entire country. By the hundreds of thousands, workers joined unions, fought for and won important victories in better wages, shorter hours, and, above all, the realistic basis of security that only organization gives. As purchasing power expanded, business improved, and the corporations—even those that were forced to raise wages—began heaping up profits on a grander scale than even before the crash.

But the plain fact that any measure of recovery depended on the increase of the mass purchasing power of the country, which in turn meant higher wages, was something that monopoly capital could not accept, and so it began its campaign against the New Deal. The reactionary program they offered to the people was overwhelmingly rejected, and Roosevelt was retained in office with a clear mandate to carry out a social legislative program that would ensure the people some sort of security, some measure of control over their own lives.

That was labor's program last November, that is labor's program now when we are in the midst of a recession encouraged and extended by the reactionaries. The workers of America, industrial and agricultural, organized and unorganized, have their eyes fixed on the central issue. It was asserted the other day by John L. Lewis in his statement on the growing crisis of unemployment created by the big corporations: "A citizen of the United States has a right to live. He has a right to work."

AMERICAN CAPITALISM has its answer to labor. The answer was announced, in the most unmistakable and emphatic terms, last week at the Congress of American Industry, the annual meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers.

To all the hopes of the people of this country, the assembled capitalists replied "No." They not only announced a program that would smash the labor movement as it exists today but they demanded an unconditional surrender of the people. They demanded in effect that the twenty-seven million American citizens who voted for Roosevelt's program last November now reverse themselves and accept a return to the period of unrestrained profiteering. They called for the open shop. They called for the incorporation of unions. They called for the removal of taxes on their own profits. They demanded to be "let alone" to loot the country at will. And unless these demands were complied with, they threatened the country with an extension of the recession. They threatened in plain words what the country has felt was happening anyway: a strike of capital. No other meaning can be found, or was intended to be found, in the passage in the keynote speech of Lamont du Pont, presidetn of the E. I. do Pont de Nemours Co.:

> Obviously, then, when the future is uncertain, business is uncertain. It becomes like an automobile driver who, blinded by fog, feels his way over a strange road, fearful of the ditch. The power and speed built into the car are useless. There is no fair opportunity to employ them except at the risk of a wreck. Consequently the sensible driver slows down or pulls off to the side until the fog lifts.

This is the answer of American capitalism to American labor. This is the challenge,

From a contemporary cartoon by Hooper

1861: JEFFERSON DAVIS

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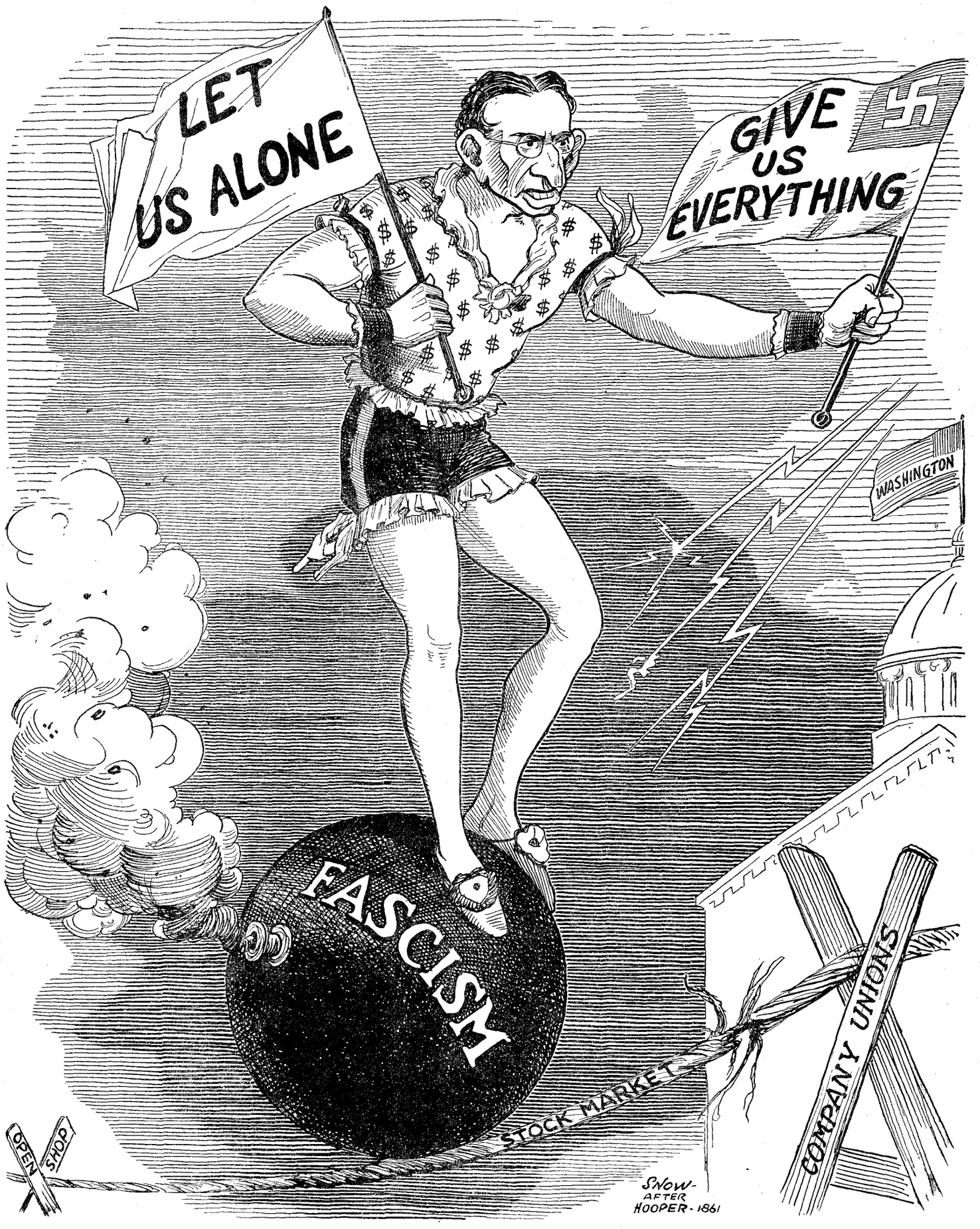

Snow

1937: LAMMOT DU PONT

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flung with complete arrogance. Instead of the right to organize, the right of each worker to come hat in hand to the boss. Instead of a measure of security for the great masses of the people, full security for capital to grab everything in sight and to keep it all. Instead of any attempt to control Wall Street, full license for monopoly capital to lead the country into another abyss. No concessions, no compromise. "Let us alone!" and "Give us everything!" are the simple and all-sufficient answers of capital to labor. Let us see what this answer and this program mean in their larger implications.

IN THE FIRST PLACE it should be emphasized that this year's meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers was something more than the annual Congress of Industry. *Time* magazine called it—in advance—"the greatest aggregation of white-tied wealth and power ever assembled under one roof." Insiders knew just what was planned by this "Coalition Congress" as *Time* correctly termed it in stating that "this year's session of the Congress of Industry has aroused more interest, both business and political, than any since N.A.M. was founded in 1895." And from the keynote speech of du Pont to the final address of C. M. Chester, the program was developed logically and unhesitatingly, until Chester could say with truth: "We have cleared our thinking in open forum and we have emerged with a unity of thought and purpose which may have far-reaching effects on the industrial life of our people."

The meeting was carefully prepared. The "Platform for 1938" that the N.A.M. adopted was drawn up by a committee of forty-two leading employers with the advice of five hundred others. It represents the considered program of the main body of American capitalism. And its main points are these:

Against the wages and hours bill: "Freedom from federal control of prices, wages, and hours in manufacturing."

Against the anti-trust laws: "Coöperation with competitors, within legal limits. . . ."

For the open shop: "The right of individual employees to seek, secure, and retain employment without regard to membership or non-membership in any organization and to bargain individually."

For company unions: "The right of employees and employers to form organizations for their mutual advantage."

Incorporation of trade unions: "Legal and social responsibility of both employers and employees for their commitments and their acts."

Against the undistributed profits tax: "Legislation which reduces incentive to invest funds. . . ."

Against the capital gains tax: "Policies which have the effect of redistributing existing wealth and income. . . ."

The points in the program on "creating new and broader markets," on "coöperation with agriculture" and on "peace" contain much verbiage, but virtually no discoverable meaning. On "constructive efforts to alleviate depression effects," there is a pathetic reiteration of the idea that the way to avoid disastrous slumps is to level out the business cycle, though no inkling is given as to the means necessary for the end. That's the program.

WHY THIS PROGRAM? Business, we are told, needs "certainty" and "confidence." No longer are there hosannas to eternal prosperity. The rulers of finance and industry have become prophets of doom, predicting nothing less than "the destruction of the economic and political system of which you are a part," as Virgil Jordan, president of the National Industrial Conference Board, told the association. From du Pont's "fog" to C. M. Chester's "signals of distress," the prevailing imagery at the congress was one best suited to creating a panic.

The "Platform for 1938" whines for a "reasonable profit." Actually, big business has enjoyed far beyond a reasonable profit for the past two years. According to the National City Bank, the net profits of two hundred and sixty-five leading industrial enterprises for the first nine months of 1938 amounted to $1,080,000,000. The net profits for these companies last year amounted to $835,000,000. The increase in profit amounts to 29.4 per cent.

Individual corporations, all associated with spokesmen at this congress, showed the same tendency. C. M. Chester's General Foods Corp. showed a profit of $9,791,274 for the first nine months of 1937. The du Pont corporation piled up net profits of $62,799,523 in the same period. Ernest T. Weir's National Steel cleared $16,935,966.

Why, then, all the panic?

The answer lies not in the bank balances of the big corporations but in their hatred for two movements which have forged forward during the past two years: the New Deal, and industrial unionism.

The Congress of American Industry was the American Liberty League writ large. Big business has decided to press its advantage now that the New Deal, through timidity and confusion of purpose, has temporarily the offensive. The Liberty League to licking in the 1936 election. But it did not stop trying. The Weirs and Girdl reformed their ranks on a "coalition They no longer ask their associates to endorse a Republican like Landon. They ask only that the fight be carried on against Roosevelt. Both Democrats and Republicans are invited.

The "Platform for 1938" aims at the complete destruction of the New Deal.

On the economic side, the capitalists are confronted with a labor movement that has in two years gained in militancy and consciousness of purpose more than was achieved in the previous fifty. The Committee for Industrial Organization actually succeeded in organizing, for the first time, the great open-shop, mass-production industries—steel, auto, rubber. In various localities, independent political action by labor has not only been accomplished but victories have been gained.

The "Platform for 1938" aims at the complete destruction of the organized labor movement, especially industrial unionism and independent political action by labor.

Big business links the New Deal with growth of the labor movement through the National Labor Relations Act. Collapse of the one is viewed as a step toward destruction of the other.

Despite their huge profits, the capitalists are bent on smashing the promises of President Roosevelt's Constitution Day speech and the concrete program advanced by the C.I.O. at its Atlantic City convention. The weapon at their command is sabotage of recovery, as illustrated by du Pont's parable of the "sensible driver." There are close parallels here to the methods of blackmail and strong-arm intimidation used to force fascism on Italy and Germany. Our job is to learn of France and Spain and build up a people's front to bar the way.

R. Flamm

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FORSYTHE'S PAGE

Variations on an Old Theme

OLD residents about these parts will recall the period when I used to devote a small portion of each working day to distrusting the British. If there is nothing further on the agenda this evening, I would like to present my report on a recent visit to the native habitat of this strange tribe. Things, unfortunately, were as I had feared. Nothing is more distressing than to find one's prejudices confirmed at every step, and before the visit was through it was plain that I could just as easily have remained at home and done my hating before an open wood-fire.

Analyzing the thing, I find that it is not England that I dislike or the English people, but some rare attribute which might be called the English character. It is a flexible instrument, the English character, having two speeds forward and nine backward, and with a shift in the open field calculated to befuddle friend and foe alike. It is privately an excellent character and publicly something which would be ignored by the Salvation Army truck if left out on the stoop for collection.

When the word hypocrite is mentioned, every ruling-class Englishman within hearing is certain to raise an eyebrow of protest. He has become extremely sensitive on this point, and one of the sad things of the post-war period is the picture of the British beginning to doubt their perfection. Without the belief that Albion was invented by God to rule the universe, something is lacking and the world is not half so beautiful to live in. Being Scottish, I have been less impressed by our English cousins than many of the comrades, but I almost regret the harsh words I have used about them. If a few unkind remarks from me is enough to make the British empire apologetic, I'm sorry I ever spoke.

BEING a great one for history, I was intensely interested in the recent visit of Lord Halifax to Herr Hitler. Before anybody starts yelling, I may add that historical parallels almost never run parallel and that there is no more a set English character than there is an Oskaloosa, Okla., or a South Bend, Ind., character. Nations act out of historical necessity, but there are certain traits, which come from such necessity, that persist through the generations. The English, in making certain that the cards are always stacked in their favor, carry on their diplomatic life in a fashion which would be shocking to an Igoroto. The commentators who felt that Lord Halifax's visit to Hitler corresponded with the visit of Lord Haldane to the Kaiser in 1912 entirely missed the point.

What Haldane did was confine himself to the naval rivalry between Germany and Great Britain. What Halifax did was confer on colonies and Central Europe. It has been forgotten that England and Germany had very beautiful deals about colonies worked out prior to the World War. Without breaking the news to the owners, England and Germany signed papers in 1893 which were to lead to the seizure and division of Portugal's possessions in Africa. That agreement was initialed again in 1913 and announced to the world in 1914, just before the outbreak of the war.

At the risk of boring you still further, I will tell you something about Central Europe which you may not have known before. The sore point in that region in 1914 was Serbia, just as it is Czechoslovakia today. Austria was determined to destroy Serbia. In July 1914, its great chance came when the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated at Sarajevo. An ultimatum was delivered to Serbia, which was so ruthless that all Europe was shocked. Despite the severity of the demands, Serbia acceded to all but one minor point. It refused to allow the investigation of the assassination to be done by Austria instead of Serbia. To have done this would have meant surrendering all sovereignty and dignity as a power. The capitulation to the ultimatum was so complete and so abject, however, that even Kaiser Wilhelm agreed that Austria should now be satisfied.

But at that crucial moment, what was England doing? I ask it only to bring out this strange matter of the public character of the English diplomat as contrasted with his private morals. Did he desire to see justice done to Serbia? Not even a very little of it. Instead Sir Edward Grey offered mediation on the basis of allowing Austria to *occupy Belgrade and other cities of Serbia as a "pledge" of good behavior.* It is exactly as if England were to urge Czechoslovakia now to allow Hitler's forces to occupy Prague as an indication of the good faith of the Czechs in dealing with the German minority in that country.

Before you begin muttering that the parallel does not in any particular apply to conditions today, let me remind you that there is an isolationist party in England even larger and more important than our own. It is made up of such as the London *Times,* the Lord Beaverbrook papers, and the Lord Harmsworth (Northcliffe) press. Its representatives are Lord Halifax and Mr. Neville Chamberlain, and it is supported by all gentlemen of reactionary tint who are more concerned about their personal possessions than about the moral prestige of the British empire. They have said in exact words that what happens to "obscure" Central European countries is no concern of Great Britain's and that they have no intention of wasting a single life over such problems.

The visit of M. Delbos and M. Chautemps to London, which followed Lord Halifax's return from Berlin, has convinced many people that all is well in the world, but there again it is necessary to look back into history to get a proper perspective on this mysterious ailment which operates as the British character. Prior to 1914 the alliance between France and England had been recemented at every opportunity. The general staffs of the two armies had been working in collaboration for years. The entire French fleet was stationed in the Mediterranean as part of an agreement with the English, who were to protect France in the North Sea while France looked after the English life line through the Suez.

AND now see what happened. When Germany declared war on Russia and a general European conflict was made certain, Sir Edward Grey called in Paul Cambon, the French ambassador, and said to him: "France must make her own decision at this moment without reckoning on assistance which we are not now in a position to promise."

Cambon knew what that meant. It meant that, with the British fleet neutral, France was at the mercy of the German fleet sweeping down from the Baltic. He refused to transmit the message to his government. During the tragic day which followed, when the fate of France depended on the integrity of the righteous and upright British, Cambon said bitterly to Wickham Steed: "I am waiting to learn whether the word 'honor' has been struck out of the English vocabulary."

It may be that M. Delbos and M. Chautemps had thoughts of that sort when they crossed the Channel to pick up where Halifax had left off. It may be that M. Delbos, meeting with Dr. Benes in Prague and thinking of modern times in Spain and older times in Serbia, had thoughts of the same order about Britain.

As for the British themselves, they remain amazed that anybody mistrusts them. The English gentleman will be indignant if he is reminded that his country's attitude toward Spain or Czechoslovakia is no more noble than a compact he might make with a band of second-story men whereby he will allow them passage through his garden to rob his neighbors, provided the burglars do not touch his precious home. He will not be able to understand that at all, being not too smart when it comes to recognizing their national traits.

ROBERT FORSYTHE.

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Oil for the Invasion of China

By S. Tyme

AT the present moment nine world powers have decided that nothing can be done to prevent Japanese aggression in China. Yet two of these nine powers, the United States and Great Britain, are in effect making the invasion of China possible. Practically all the oil used by Japan is bought from markets controlled by these two countries. It is the oil sold to Japan which runs her Diesels and moves her supplies and men into China.

As far as the Japanese are concerned, the oil supply of the world is mainly controlled by the United States and Great Britain. The Mexican government as yet has little to sell, and the U.S.S.R., although producing immense quantities of oil, does not hawk her wares on the Japanese markets.

Recently, interesting facts concerning the situation in the Japanese oil industry were reported to an American chemical journal by K. Kitsuta [*Industrial & Engineering Chemical News,* Ed. 15, 434, 1937]. Along with the discussion of that data we might review briefly the futile attempts of the Japanese war-makers to make the country self-sufficient in petroleum products.

The Japanese fascists are aware of their petroleum deficiency and the vulnerability of war plans based on foreign control of an essential raw material. Extensive research has been carried out in attempting to overcome this deficiency. As early as 1921 the Naval Fuel Depot started to study the problem of converting Japanese coal into oil and gasoline. Since 1926 more and more agencies have worked on the liquid fuel problem. Among the more important of these are the Fuel Research Institute set up by the ministry of commerce and industry, the Tokyo Industrial Experimental Laboratory, the South Manchurian Railway Co., and the Institute for Physical and Chemical Research.

The research has been carried out along two main lines: to develop new oil sources in the Japanese empire and to utilize these and the ones already being worked to their fullest extent; and to find oil substitutes which could be produced at home and thus alleviate some of the demand for petroleum products.

Concerning the attempted discovery of the new oil sources and the increased utilization of the old, we may take as a criterion crude-oil production in the six oil-producing provinces of Japan from 1932 to 1936 (Table I). Table II shows production and importations.

From these tables we see that while production has increased in some fields, it falls off in others so that the amount of domestic crude oil produced in 1936 does not differ markedly from that in 1929 whereas imports had increased about two and a half times during that period. With the single exception of the Akita province, attempts at increased production have been unsuccessful, and in two large oil fields production has steadily declined.

I: Production of Crude Oil in Japan

(*Millions of gallons*)

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936
Niigata Province	38.839	33.482	30.713	28.034	23.606
Akita Province	23.663	22.223	40.454	61.123	71.193
Hokkaido Island	4.447	3.865	3.805	3.539	2.963
Nagano Province	.007	.006	.006	.006	.006
Shizuoka Province	.007	.007	.007	.006	.006
Yamagata Province	.004	.005	.004	.005	.005
Total	66.967	59.588	74.989	92.713	97.779

Attempts at the conversion of coal into gasoline and oil have been uniformly unsuccessful because the character of Japanese coal permits only 30 percent to be liquefied. The liquefaction of coal is a regular commercial process in Germany where the coal is better. The process consists essentially of passing hydrogen gas under pressure and higher temperatures into a chamber containing powdered coal mixed of oils and gasoline. In 1928 the Naval Fuel Depot was successful in liquefying coal from the Fushun area in South Manchuria to about 70 percent. The process developed is fairly practicable. Two large industrial plants are being built to liquefy Fushun coal, one in North Korea and the other in South Manchuria. By 1938 or 1939 they will probably produce about 20 to 25 million gallons of crude oil yearly; a fair-sized drop in the Japanese oil buckets.

But even this will scarcely alter the general picture because normal expansion of consumption and increasing military aggression wipe out such advances before they occur.

Along the line of developing substitutes for certain petroleum products—especially gasoline—no striking results can be recorded. The use of mixtures of 10 percent alcohol with 90 percent gasoline as a substitute for gasoline in the driving of combustion engines is so fraught with difficulties that they are being gradually abandoned even by fascist Italy and Germany.

Certain Japanese nationalists of the Araki clique have accused the United States and Great Britain of dumping petroleum in Japan in order to keep the Nipponese industry infantile and weak. Such a charge is utterly nonsensical, simply because Japan doesn't have the necessary oil deposits to build up its industry. In addition such an argument completely ignores the higher labor costs in foreign countries and the cost of transportation.

Since 80 percent of the crude-oil consumption is supplied by the foreign markets, it is only natural to expect that refined petroleum products would fare worse. And they do. According to figures released by the Nippon Sekiyu Co., 91 percent of the heavy oil and 95 percent of the gasoline used in Japan in 1936 come from abroad either as refined products or else as crude oil to be refined in Japan. Other data as released by that company are listed in Table III. They show a similar trend throughout.

The tables show clearly the utter dependence of Japanese fascism upon the two major democratic nations for its oil supplies. If Japan is successful in conquering China, it will be so because the governments of the United States and Great Britain really underwrite the Japanese war plans.

In view of the new stand taken against the war-making nations in his Chicago speech, the American people must demand of President Roosevelt an oil embargo against Japan. The real leadership for getting our government to deal sternly with aggressors must come from the ranks of organized labor and the masses of people. A good beginning has already been made by the boycott movements developing in the United States. But more than this is needed. By getting an oil embargo against Japan the American people will have thrown one of the best monkey-wrenches into the Japanese war machine.

II: Production and Importation of Crude Oil

(*Millions of gallons*)

Year	Production	Importation	Total
1926	71.3	86.1	157.4
1927	69.0	104.4	173.4
1928	77.2	125.3	202.5
1929	82.2	129.5	211.7
1930	83.6	142.9	226.5
1931	80.7	152.6	236.3
1932	66.9	214.8	281.7
1933	59.6	270.8	330.4
1934	75.0	322.3	397.3
1935	92.7	344.8	437.5
1936	97.8	406.2	504.0

III: Supplies of Refined Petroleum Products

(*Millions of gallons*)

	1934	1935	1936
Gasoline			
Domestic Crude Oil	12.3	13.0	16.6
Imported Crude Oil	116.7	137.9	157.6
Imported Gasoline	145.4	157.8	172.9
Heavy Oil			
Domestic Crude Oil	9.5	22.4	34.4
Imported Crude Oil	50.1	52.4	78.0
Imported Heavy Oil	217.5	311.9	281.2

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The Meat Trust Defends Womanhood

By Robert Moore

THE plaintive wails of the meat trust, echoing and reëchoing in New York City's crowded market places, would bring tears to the eyes of a Franco or a Girdler. When a barbed shaft from the bow of some eagle-eyed marksman sinks deep into the trust's tough hide, its wails swell momentarily into a resounding roar. For the most part, however, its cries are the lamentations of one who is being defamed and persecuted. Such tactics, the meat trust has found, are always more effective than any other when an indignant public gets on its trail and drives it into its burrow.

Behind these wails of the hard-pressed meat trust lies the fear that its monopolistic practices may be laid bare by the numerous investigations now being launched by city, state, and national governments, in response to the charges which are being lodged against it by millions of meat consumers and producers throughout the land. For, strange as it may seem to the "big four"—Armour, Swift, Cudahy, and Wilson—there are vast numbers of people who believe that this chummy little group of leading meat packers is not overly eager to conduct its business with due regard for the public welfare. Who, in fact, actually hold that it is willfully shoving up meat prices with one hand and holding down livestock prices with the other.

The more immediate fear of the trust is that compulsory meat grading will be forced upon it by a New York City ordinance—and that, as a result, all meats sold in the greatest consuming market in the nation will have to pass before government graders before they are offered for sale to kosher and non-kosher shops, and, through these shops, to the public. Until the present struggle for supremacy between the public and the trust has further crystallized public opinion, and created a demand for other reforms, government grading is the dominant issue of the hour.

If the meat trust is to be taken at its word, Machiavelli in his palmiest days never conceived a plan more sinister than this one. Sit back, gentle reader, and listen patiently to the hoary argument advanced by spokesmen of this benevolent and fraternal organization whenever compulsory government meat grading is discussed on the rostrum or in the press. Though you may have heard it a dozen times or more, no harm can come from hearing it again.

CLEARING its collective throat, and pulling down its totalitarian vest, the meat trust dramatically demolishes the need for any such legislation with one impatient sweep of its hairy hand.

"I brand this," shouts the trust, "as an ill-conceived reform of no possible good to anyone. Its unwarranted adoption would only foolishly serve to add to the already high cost of meat, born of the morganatic marriage of the three years' drought and the A.A.A., which, thank God, the Supreme Court wisely nullified. When the unbelievable costs of grading all the meat used in New York City have been added to present prices, no one can foretell to what heights they will soar.

"Even though the city should force such a law upon its millions of consumers, the inability of the government to hire enough skilled graders to grade all the meat which New York City uses would defeat its purpose. I say this despite the estimates of some that not in excess of a dozen graders would be needed. Though I admit that we have had no trouble in getting enough trained graders to grade the more than a billion pounds of fresh beef which we will sell under special brands this year, I can assure you that the government will find it impossible to get enough graders. Nor will the graders the government needs be good enough to turn out a high-class job.

"Last, but not least, consider what the forgotten housewife will say if she is offered beef stamped with such suggestive names as 'medium,' or 'common.' Will she want to be seen going out of a shop with beef so stamped, and risk being seen by her friends and neighbors? I say, without fear of contradiction, that anyone who purposely seeks to subject any woman to such abject humiliation is not fit to be called a good citizen. At present, the unstamped beef of lower grades bought by so many hundreds of thousands of women subjects them to no such disgrace, since none of them is the wiser. In deference to women, let's not change this plan which, as time has proved, works so well.

"I could bring up countless other reasons why no compulsory government meat-grading law should be passed in New York City, or in any other city, but it would tire you. [Cries of *Hear! Hear!*] Still, though the hour is late, I cannot refrain from mentioning what I deem to be the most important objection of all. *Such a law would put the government in business!* So to put the government in business would regiment millions, interfere with the inalienable rights bestowed upon us by the Declaration of Independence, and deprive us of the sacred liberties guaranteed to even the lowliest American by that glorious and imperishable instrument, the Constitution of the United States.

"Though the American people long have become accustomed to the government inspection of all meats prepared for use in interstate commerce and for exportation abroad, and many states have like inspection services of their own, I assure you that government grading of fresh meats is another matter. It is one thing to inspect meats for healthfulness, and quite another thing to grade them for quality. Although it may be hard for you to understand this, I assure you it is true. I hold unqualifiedly that government grading would lead us into many grave and unforeseen dangers.

"In summary, I maintain that the millions of women who want to buy ungraded meats should not be forced to buy graded meats against their will. I contend that it is their constitutional right to buy any kind of meat they wish. Appealing to your spirit of fairness and deep love of liberty, I urge you to turn thumbs down on this wicked proposal. It is my fervent hope that you will move heaven and earth to defeat this vicious measure."

John Heliker

A RATHER grotesque argument?

Admitted. Yet if you think this argument is fantastic, you ought to take a peek at the one given the producers. And then try fitting the two arguments together into one consistent whole—there's grotesqueness for you. For it must not be forgotten that the meat trust, like

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the Roman god, Janus, has two faces—one turned eternally toward the meat-consuming East, and the other as fixedly toward the meat-producing West. Only by playing meat-eaters against meat-producers, and vice versa, can the trust deceive both, and conceal the real reason for the ever-widening price-spread between what farmers get for their livestock and what consumers pay for their meat and its by-products.

What are the meat trust's arguments to the livestock producers? It again becomes necessary for you to hitch up your chair and listen to its expostulations. All around you, on the convention floor, sit the members of the livestock growers' association which the trust is addressing. They, like you, want to hear every word it utters.

"I have come to you today," begins the trust, "to tell you about one of the most damnable pieces of legislation which the misguided consumers of this nation have ever tried to cram down your throats. I refer to that malicious and nefarious proposal now before the Congress of the United States in the form of H. R. 13022—the government meat-grading bill. Another of a like kind is now being urged in New York City.

"Up to this time, the great meat-packing concerns who serve you so efficiently have been grading practically all of the better grades of fresh beef and lamb which pass through their plants, and selling this meat under the well-known and popular names, 'large,' 'larger,' 'mammoth,' 'giant,' 'jumbo,' 'colossal,' and 'supercolossal.' Now, along comes the government with a proposal to grade and stamp not only the better grades which we are merchandising for you so successfully, but the lower grades as well.

"What, I ask you, will happen when 75 percent of all the beef produced in this country is thrown onto the market stamped 'medium,' 'common,' and 'cutter'? Gentlemen, you know what will happen. Such a plan will drastically lower the prices of these lower grades, and pull down the prices of the better grades along with them. It will, in fact, have a devastating effect upon the whole livestock market, for veal, lamb, pork, and poultry prices move up or down in sympathy with beef prices.

"It is true that the women of this country are now buying and using the lower grades of beef as fast as this beef is being put on the market. But I am dead sure that these women would not buy this meat, except at lower prices, if they really knew they were getting beef of 'medium,' 'common,' and 'cutter' grade. Why perplex these women by putting such nonsensical names on this meat? If they think they are getting beef of better quality than these names suggest, why try to change their minds? It looks like pretty poor business to me.

"Again, why let the government tell you and me what names we shall put on our beef, and at the same time add a lot to the cost of selling it? I think we're doing a pretty good job of selling, as it is. And not asking for any government help, either. There are too many people leaning on the government, and increasing the taxes which you and we pay to maintain it. If put into effect, this government meat grading, along with other folderols, will about break us before we get through.

"Though the hour is late, I cannot refrain from mentioning an objection which overshadows all. Government meat grading will regiment," etc., etc., etc. . . .

Patient reader, you know what follows next. It's the same old stem-winder on liberty and individual initiative and the Constitution, which always concludes every appeal of the trust. It can be omitted.

AS USUAL, none of these arguments reveal the facts. Far from being deeply concerned about the welfare of either producers or consumers, the "big four" is thinking only of its own. Through their use of nationwide sales outlets, and extensive national advertising establishing scores of special brands, these four leading packers enjoy a big competitive advantage over the hundreds of small packers largely reliant upon local markets. Should compulsory government meat grading be put to use in New York and other major cities, the meat of any given grade produced by a small packer would be deemed as good as meat of that grade produced by the largest packer in the land. This would tend to break down the meat trust's grip on consumers wedded to private brands, and give freer play to the competitive forces so necessary if monopoly is to be throttled and controlled. That's the crux of the problem.

Charles Martin

No one is fooling the meat trust. For ten long years it has worked with might and main to establish its special brands, against that ominous day when the government graded meats of the small packer *might be* put on a par with these brands. Full-page magazine advertisements in color, costly window and counter displays, soft radio music, and billboards on every corner—all paid for, of course, by consumers and producers—have been used in prodigal fashion to help eliminate or lessen competition. Naturally, the thought that a simple government stamp on a meat carcass could easily mean as much to the thoughtful buyer of meat as a private brand of whatever kind is terrifying to the trust. No wonder it is so deeply concerned about "loss of liberty," "free initiative," and "rights guaranteed every citizen by the Constitution."

The meat trust is well established. In 1936, according to the 1936-37 annual report of the National Livestock and Meat Board, the "big four" branded over one billion pounds of fresh beef alone. During this period, some thousand other packers in the nation branded only about one hundred million pounds of fresh beef, according to reliable estimates. What is significant is that the "big four" has steadfastly held that government graders cannot do for all the people what the hired graders of the leading packers are doing for their employers. Inconsistent as is this stand, there are many who have swallowed it, hook, line, and sinker, and thus have materially aided the "big four" in its efforts to control the market.

Government grading is not, as the meat packers would lead you to believe, an exceedingly complex practice hard for the public to understand. Here, briefly, is what B. F. McCarthy, of Washington, D. C., senior marketing specialist, Meat Grading Service, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, says about it:

"The names the government uses for meats—prime, choice, good, medium, common, cutter, and low cutter—are partly but not entirely self-explanatory. Cutter and low cutter are grades not regularly sold in many retail meat markets. Where they are on sale, the patrons buy on a price basis.

"The five grades—prime, choice, good, medium, common—can be easily memorized. Prime is understood by nearly everyone to be superlative. To most people, choice means something carefully selected for exceptionally fine quality. Good, while not expected to possess superlative character, is still worthy of consideration. Medium represents a grade about half way between the highest and lowest. Common, or plain, is one grade lower than medium.

"The increase in the demand for government meat grading service is indicated by the substantial annual increases in the amount of beef graded and stamped. During the first year of the service, ended June 30, 1928, approximately 36,600,000 pounds of beef were graded and stamped. During the fiscal year ended June 30, 1937, more than 460,000,000 pounds of beef were graded by the bureau. Since July 1, 1928, the grading has been on a fee basis, and has been supported entirely by fees charged slaughterers, wholesalers, and retailers who have asked for the service.

"The average cost in the large United States markets where grading is done at point of origin does not exceed one-eightieth of a cent per pound. A recent incomplete take-off at New York and Chicago showed that costs of packing-house cooler grading by a grader in each city was about one-hundredth of a cent per pound. This, in terms of added cost to consumers, means that were all beef, veal, and lamb in the United States graded and stamped under a uniform system and with full coöperation on the part of the packers, the total per-capita cost per year need not exceed the cost of a single morning newspaper."

ON THIS must rest the case of "the public *vs.* the meat trust." New York City, other cities, and the nation at large would gain much from compulsory grading of fresh meats by skilled government graders. Every consumer interested in his own and the public welfare should urge its early and universal adoption.

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Notes from Arkansas

By Robert B. Duncan

BERT—short for Mrs. Bertha Dickinson, sharecropper's wife—came to a workers' school in North Carolina early in July. She came directly from old St. Francis bottom, Ark., directly from the cotton fields. She came weatherbeaten, sinewy, and looking—at first glance—like a woman of sixty-five or seventy. But Bert is really only forty-four years old, and as young as can be in spirit. Soon you perceive that spirit and know that you have met a person who is living on, undaunted by the beatings that she has taken. You perceive, too, that she must have been extremely beautiful at the age of twenty and thereabouts.

Lucy-Lee, Bert's oldest child and the wife of a West Virginian coal miner, is only fourteen years younger than Bert. When she was thirteen years old, Bert, hoping to make things better for herself, eloped with her lover, who was also thirteen years old, from La Mar County, Ala., to Mississippi, where she was married. About a year later, Lucy-Lee was born.

Now, at forty-four, Bert is the mother of five children, the youngest a daughter eleven years old, the other four over twenty and married. Of her children Bert is proud, and has reason to be. "All of them is Union," she says; and to be "Union" is for Bert, herself a militant member of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, the very life of life.

At only one point is that pride-of-family marred. One son has recently married a girl who is not Union. Bert, however, is accepting the situation philosophically, as a challenge. Speaking of this black sheep, she says simply and convincingly, "By God, she'll never be a Dickinson until she's Union . . . and she'll be Union."

Fortunately, the slightly distorting element that the new daughter-in-law has introduced into the family is more than offset by Bert's eleven-year-old Hattie-Joe, for Hattie-Joe eats, talks, thinks, sleeps, and sings Union. So Union is she that she has already composed a song that is popular among union members, not as popular, perhaps, as the croppers' battle song, "Raggeddy, Raggeddy Are We," but popular nevertheless. Just before Bert left for school, five thousand croppers—all Union—held a meeting near Forrest City. At that meeting, Hattie-Joe's song was sung and Hattie-Joe was made a member of the union.

Another, and important, union activity in which Hattie-Joe engages is reading newspaper stories and union documents to Bert, who, although she is almost illiterate, is president of an S.T.F.U. local and one of the union's most ardent, most vigorous, and most effective organizers. Writin', her own writin', Bert can read, but not read'n'. This summer while she was at the school, she acquired, with the assistance of an expert in remedial reading, a rudimentary grasp of the printed word. When she left for Arkansas late in August, she was planning to go to a public school back home. And we were all convinced that she would go and would learn to read, for we knew, after having associated with her for six weeks, that she was, in most respects, just about the smartest student that the school, which has held eleven summer sessions, had had. And we knew, too that what was more important than her "smartness"—a "smartness" that she retains even after having had such a severe case of pellagra that it has affected what she calls her "remembrance"—was her absolute devotion to her cause and her singularly striking rightness on social, economic, and moral issues. Always, when other members of the group were, because of poisonous prejudices or equally poisonous "ideas," floundering in a morass of blurred perspective and ruinous thinking, Bert could be depended upon to cut through, with flashing wit and keen insight, to the essential facts and to sound conclusions. Perhaps, before speaking, she would, as she is a snuff dipper like most croppers, have to expectorate into her "spit can" (contributed by Maxwell House) or even, on occasion, go and get it. Without her snuff, Bert was as nervous and irritable as a scared rabbit; with it and her "spit can," or the open outdoors in front of her for good spitt'n' range, she was up to almost anything challenging and dangerous, despite what pellagra and poverty and disease and two broken arms and two floods had done to her.

I say "almost" because Bert, who is no more scared of a planter or of a planter's hired gunman—usually a sheriff or a sheriff's deputy—than a North Carolina mountaineer is of a rattlesnake, is terribly scared of thunder. And she is scared, too, when she rides in an automobile along mountain roads. Thunder drives her to her room and even to her bed, and an automobile trip through the mountains wreaks havoc upon her heart, which the school doctor says is already in a bad condition. The bad condition has been caused by a lot of things, but mostly by abscessed teeth that should be extracted. Needless to say, croppers shed their teeth as they do their hair. The marvels of dental science, for obvious reasons, are not available to them, and not even *Saturday Evening Post* advertisements have been able to carry to them the full and boundless benefits that burgeon off from the marvels of the other "modern sciences."

Of two things Bert is sure, surer by far than she is of God's beneficence and much-advertised good intentions. She is sure that "It's ignurance that's akill'n' us"; and she is equally sure—sure with an all-consuming and inspiring faith—that the union can and will deliver the croppers into a promised land. The promised land that she envisions is not, however, a typical ready-made, perfect, and idyllic heaven. Not at all. Bert is too much of a realist for that. She knows that what is needed is organization, organization, and more organization—education, education, and more education. And she knows, too, that anyone who wishes to do effective work as a union organizer has to learn to put up with associates who are human and, therefore, far from perfect. Each S.T.F.U. leader has been competently appraised by her wise mind, not for purposes of gossip or malicious horse-play, but for purposes of the business at hand. She wants to know what she is doing and with whom she is dealing.

So profoundly convinced is Bert that "It's ignurance that's a kill'n' us" that she occasionally gets her mental wires crossed. One day she told us a story about one of her many pilgrimages from state to state. She and her husband, Jim, had gone to Texas. Jim had a good job. He was working for a railroad company for what seemed to a sharecropper to be munificent wages, and he and Bert were living in a good house, the roof of which didn't leak, a house that didn't let cats—and "weather"—in through cracks, that had a solid floor in it, and windows that were made of glass and wood and putty rather than of sheer empty space, and, most amazing of all, screens on the windows, tacked on, to be sure, but there nevertheless, there as a protection against the hordes of insects which, in Arkansas and throughout the cotton belt, eat at, gnaw at, and poison the bodies of both the croppers and their domestic animals from early spring until late fall.

ONE DAY, Bert, who had only recently agonized through a typical Texas sand-storm, received a letter from Jim's brother, who was back home in Arkansas chopp'n' cott'n. In glowing terms, the writer of the letter told about a fish fry that was soon to take place somewhere down in the bottom, along the river. The writer also referred to old friends and said many things about them that awakened in Bert nostalgic symptoms.

For one night, and for one night only, Bert kicked against the goad. In the morning, she said to Jim: "Let's go back to Arkansas." Back to Arkansas, bag and baggage—mostly bag (one bag, or sack)—went Bert and Jim.

Astonished, I asked, "How could you do it, Bert?" Eyes twinkling, her leathery tanned face wreathed in a telltale smile, Bert flashed back quick as a mule skinner's whip, "My

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God, Bob, ain't I bin a tell'n' you that it's ignurance that's a kill'n' us!"

As I had often done before, I pointed out to Bert that although she was unschooled, she was, in a sense, far more and better educated, in every real sense of the word, than are the academic pundits who strut, or mog, or pussyfoot out meager and pitiful lives in our seminaries of "higher" learning, paying no attention at all, the while, or next to no attention at all, or ill-willed and obfuscated attention to sharecroppers, "niggers," and such.

Once after I had made this point for about the *n*th time, Bert shot back at me, "My God, Bob, I ain't a say'n' that I'm an idiot. God gave me a brain—part of it Indian—when I was born'd, and I've bin a us'n' it e'r since. But I ain't na'r gone to no school."

No wonder she hasn't ever gone to school. At six she was chopping cotton in Alabama and living with kind foster parents. Those foster parents, who were native Alabamians, and her husband's real parents taught her, strange as it may seem, that "Niggers have feel'n's jest like white folks." That was a queer doctrine for white Alabama sharecroppers to espouse and teach, and it really never did permeate into the innermost depths of Bert's being until after she had become "Union." Today, although it is still difficult for her to use the word "Negro" instead of the slave word "nigger," she is the best organizer of Negroes that the union has. And it is easy to understand why she is successful. Speaking of Negroes, she says, "They eat the same kind of food that we eat; they live in the same kind of shacks that we live in; they work for the same boss men that we work for; they hoe beside us in the fields; they drink out of the same bucket that we drink out of; ignurance is a kill'n' them jest the same as it's a kill'n' us. . . . Why *shouldn't* they belong to the same union that we belong to?"

That is the simple philosophy of a sagacious woman who is faced with stark and bitter reality, and one feels, after having associated with her over a period of weeks, that it has a better chance of getting itself accepted in the world than has the prettified philosophy of those academic snobocrats whose "intelligence" tests and "character" tests and "aptitude" tests and "achievement" tests and bughouse tests have "proved" over and over again *ad nauseam* that the Negro race is "inferior" to the race that perpetuates the institution of slavery in the United States, albeit in a new and up-to-the-economic-minute form. Bert and her "niggers" know a lot that the sycophantic snobocrats of the academies cannot know. There is a logic of snobocracy that precludes the possibility of their seeing the most vital and elemental points.

But Bert sees, sees with wide open eyes. In Arkansas, she has been for "twenty years off and on," and in Alabama, to which sovereign state she has "gone back five times," and in Mississippi whose hospitality she has enjoyed three times, and in Texas from which she was driven by sand-storms and nostalgia.

Bissell

Once in "Alerbammer," where the planters are "jest as mean but not as rich" as are the St. Francis bottom planters, Bert looked out the back door of her shack one fine day and saw her "boss man" stooping over to pull up by the roots a watermelon vine that had come up "volunteer" and that was a source of enjoyment to her and to the members of her family. Enraged, she snatched a shotgun from the wall of the shack, pointed it at Mr. Boss Man and shrieked, "Stop, you ——, or I'll make hell a present of you before two gods can skin a minner!"

The vine was not uprooted, but Bert's family never picked any watermelons from it. Threatened with death by the boss man's gunfire, the family fled from Alabama and returned to Arkansas, where it was also a crime to have a garden on a planter's land. The union is still trying to have that sort of crime and other equally heinous crimes—notably eating decent food and living in decent houses—declared unconstitutional. But the union isn't banking much on judges and courts. Indeed, it is vigilantly on guard against them and has ample reason to be, especially since more than half of its members are Negroes.

BERT thinks that the union will accomplish greater and ever greater things now that Carl E. Bailey is governor, thanks to the vote of union members. For the new governor, who pretty obviously is headed for the United States Senate, where he can continue to do yeoman service for his cropper constituents, Bert has the greatest admiration. You hope, as you listen to her talk about the man, and as you think the while about old-line politicians and their antics, that her enthusiasm is not doomed to die an all too early death under a smothering blanket of disillusionment. But even if that enthusiasm should be killed by Bailey's future actions, or by his failure to act, there would remain the even profounder and more meaningful enthusiasm that Bert has for the union and its cause. And there would remain, too—unless they are murdered, as they very well may be—the union leaders: J. R. Butler, president and indefatigable worker, who only recently was attacked and brutally beaten at Forrest City; H. L. Mitchell; Howard Kester; Claude Williams; and "Old Man" Blackstone, of whom Bert is especially proud, as he has personally gotten the attention of President and Mrs. Roosevelt and has even "worked for Roosevelt"—"Roosevelt" being, as far as Bert is concerned, the government that resides at the capital in Washington.

It was Howard Kester who, together with H. L. Mitchell, invaded St. Francis bottom not so long ago and took with him the union idea and risked his life to "sell" it. Bailey, after all, is a young politician; Kester is a noble human being. And Bert knows the difference between politics and nobility. She has known and seen in action former governor J. M. Futrell, who did his best to sabotage the Union. She has also known and seen in action—in daring action—Howard Kester and the lieutenants he induced to carry on with him. It is more than a safe bet that she will not forget what side her bread is buttered on, even if Bailey goes to Washington and forthwith forgets that he once promised to emancipate Arkansan slaves.

One day I asked Bert, "What do you think is the best thing that Bailey has given you?" She flashed back, "My God, man, PROTECTION! . . . PROTECTION!" Protection of what? Protection of civil rights, especially of the constitutional right to assemble. That is what Bailey has contributed. The union leaders need only let him know, even by telephone, that a union meeting, no matter how small, is going to be held and that there is danger of violent attack and he sends state troopers to "attend" the meeting. Already, he has, Bert says, had three "high sheriffs" in jail, and each prisoner has contributed $350 to the state treasury. These law-enforcement officers were arrested for "disturbing public worship on the Sabbath day," in other words, for endeavoring to break up a union meeting. At every union meeting, there is "Bible read'n'" and hymn singing, and some of this public worshipping is done on the Sabbath day. The high sheriffs picked out a Sabbath day and tried to start something, and they did start something.

Besides giving protection, Bailey, who himself belongs to a union, is up to a lot of other crazy doings. This year, for the first time in the history of Arkansas, free textbooks are being supplied to children who attend public schools. And the crazy loon has been trying to get rid of the state poll tax. He wants the poor people to vote. Also, he wants them to have land of their own, and, to that end, he is scheming along some line that Bert doesn't fully comprehend.

All in all, Bailey has, says Bert, "made his word his bond"; and for Bert that's the test of a man. A pretty good test.

BERT lives near Wynne, Ark., very close to Wynne in fact. I urge some of you who are reading this to go and call on her. He who goes—if he isn't an intelligence tester, or an academic research hound, or a boss man, or a boss man's lackey, or a city slicker who doesn't

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know the difference between a mule and a "pick sack"—will be greeted by a smiling hostess who will be happy to receive you cordially and hospitably. And you need not take your gun along. Bert is used to gun play. She will tote her own—and that will be enough, as all the planters in St. Francis bottom know.

Once you have become Bert's friend, you will know that you are the friend of the inimitable Jeeter Lester of St. Francis bottom. You will know, too, that she is a Jeeter Lester with a vast difference. She lives, not on Georgia's "Tobacco Road," but on Arkansas's "Cotton Road," and the great difference between those two roads is that the latter has gone union, while the former has not. And when Cotton Road went union, Bert, whose inherently staunch character and indomitable courage had already prepared her for such things, became a charter member. Today, as a result, she is a Jeeter Lester only in the sense that she has a vivacious and winning personality; a salty, but never uncouth, vocabulary; an unquenchable love of land and farmers; a quick and ready wit; and a mind that dares to wrestle with imponderables. What Jeeter Lester got as his share in our civilization—depravity, hopelessness, a long run before sensation-seeking Broadway audiences, and, at last, a handful of dry sand—Bert has missed. Through the union she will, she hopes —and hope matters—transform the croppers' gardenless, sharecropped patches into millions of fertile acres owned, worked, and loved by free-born human beings.

If you wish to hear her talk about all this, if you wish to hear her sing "Raggeddy, Raggeddy Are We" in a doleful voice that tells the sad and horrible story of St. Francis bottom as nothing else on earth can, go and visit her. So that you may know her when you meet her, I append hereto the following "excerpts from Bert's speech to an English class on child labor."

I am not going to make a speech about what I got from books. I'm getting it from what I saw myself.

I was raised in Alabama. When I was six years old I used to work from daylight to dark and I was so tired I used to lay right down on the floor when I came in and fall asleep and that way I missed supper.

I ran away and married when I was thirteen. I thought I would better my condition. . . . Then I began raisin' children.

Well, I had to start workin' my children when they was five or six years old. . . . We had three children and me to feed on six dollars a week.

My husband got a job in Arkansas and I thought I was in heaven. But the job didn't last long and we had to go back to farming again. And thar's where I met child labor again.

Negro children has to work just like white children. Thar ain't no difference among sharecroppers. They drink out o' the same bucket and git the same pay.

Schools are open for just a little while in January and February.

When we're not pickin' cotton, you can't get a job, so you just got to steal to eat. . . . If you live in Arkansas and don't steal, there's somethin' wrong with you. You got to steal to stay there. Once, in dead hours of night, I took my two boys and went to a boss man's pea-pen to steal a bag o' peas so's we'd have sumpen to eat.

The bosses carry a whip and a gun when they ride through the fields and if they think a worker ain't workin' so hard, they just give him a cut over the head. One time I seed a Negro shot down. . . . Boss man say, "Hoe that row!" Negro say, "I am hoeing." Boss shot him down.

When you ask for a settlement, the boss man says, "Hell, you are all settled up already. You done ate it up."

Hundreds of families ain't got a quilt in the house. A woman took sick in fields (not allowed to leave) and at night died of pneumonia lyin' on pick sack in front of the fire.

For doubting Thomases it is perhaps worth adding that Bernice, who is a middle-aged and sophisticated woman, told the same English class "of similar conditions in Texas. One time a group of Negroes in desperation decided to leave their plantation. They swam across the river; on the other side they were recognized as not belonging to the district, were stopped, and held until their bosses came over to get them back."

Sylvia Wald

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READERS' FORUM

Surplus Value and Socialist Surplus

To the New Masses:

WE have read with great astonishment Mr. I. Elmar's review of Professor Calvin B. Hoover's *Dictators and Democracies.* In his review, Mr. Elmar characterizes Professor Hoover's ideas as nonsense. Unfortunately, Mr. Elmar's attempt to refute this capitalist economist is, to say the least, also nonsense. What is more, it is dangerous nonsense.

In his review, I. Elmar says: "After much evasion, Professor Hoover finally admits there is such a thing as surplus value, but that it is a characteristic of capitalism, and therefore, by contrast, should not exist under socialism. This is nonsense. Socially speaking, surplus value is the amount of wealth which human labor can create in excess of what it needs to sustain and reproduce itself. It is the store of wealth upon which man has drawn to extend and develop his productive system for the creation of further wealth. The argument between capitalism and socialism is not whether or not there is or should be surplus value, but who is to own it. Under capitalism, surplus value goes to the profit-owner, who is thus enabled to provide the capital required for the further enlargement of the instruments of production in order that he may exact more profit. Under socialism, capital is provided in identically the same and only way, out of surplus value, but it is owned by *society,* by all the workers, and is used as a means of enrichment for the benefit of society, *i.e.,* all the workers."

The paragraph quoted above represents such confusion of thought, and is such an astounding distortion of Marxist economic teachings, that we feel that a correction is necessary. Mr. Elmar's confusion evidently arises from the fact that he considers surplus value, and surplus products produced in the Soviet Union, as one and the same thing. The surplus produced in the Soviet Union is that portion of the wealth which goes into the common fund for the further development of the socialist society and for the well-being of the entire people. The worker does not sell his labor-power. He himself is, in common with all other citizens of the U.S.S.R., the owner of the means of production. This has nothing in common with the production of surplus value.

The existence of surplus value depends upon certain social and historical circumstances. These conditions exist only in the capitalist form of society and in no other. Marx says: "The specific mark of the capitalist mode of production is the production of surplus value." The historical and social circumstances upon which the peculiar form of exploitation under capitalism depends, are:

1. Private ownership of the means of production by the capitalist class.
2. Production of articles for sale—that is, capitalist production is *commodity* production.
3. The existence of a large group of propertyless wage-workers—the proletariat—who sell their sole commodity, their labor-power.

The entire Marxist conception of capital is that capital itself is a *social relation.* In the words of Lenin, "Capital is a definite, social, historical production relation." Surplus value can be produced only under conditions of capitalist production. Lenin explains surplus value as follows: "The wage-worker sells his labor-power to the owner of land, factories, instruments of labor. The worker spends one part of the working day in covering the expenses of maintaining himself and his family (wages), while for the rest of the day the worker works for nothing, creating surplus value for the capitalists, the source of profit, the source of the wealth of the capitalist class."

Where private ownership of the means of production has been eliminated, where the possibility of appropriating the products of the labor of others is done away with, where the possibility, then, of exploitation of man by man has been abolished, there can be no surplus value. The authoritative text-book on political economy by A. Leontiev, a prominent Soviet economist, states: "There is not and there can never be any production of surplus value in the economy of the U.S.S.R."

We have dealt with the subject at such length because such misconceptions as betrayed by Mr. Elmar furnish the basis for many slanders against the Soviet Union, particularly by Harold Denny in the N. Y. *Times,* and counter-revolutionary Trotskyites.

Theoretical confusion, no matter how well intentioned, plays into the hands of our enemies. Theoretical clarity on such fundamental questions is an important weapon in our fight against all enemies of the Soviet Union.

New York City. Art Stein.
Chairman, Political Economy Department, Workers' School.

Mr. Bliven's Stand on Isolation

To the New Masses:

THIS is answering your note of November 13. I must confess the chief difficulty with Theodore Draper's article, "The Case Against Isolation" seems to me a confusion of purposes. One can argue that the United States ought to stay at peace. One can also argue that the United States ought to join with the other democracies in a military alliance directed against the fascist powers. One should not argue, however, that the way to achieve the first is through the second.

Insofar as Mr. Draper discusses my own views, I don't get a great deal of sense out of his article. I am not opposed to private boycotts of Japanese goods. I personally am completely on China's side in the present Far Eastern affair. I am not aware of any such difference between my support of loyalist Spain and my attitude toward China as Mr. Draper suggests. I am opposed to having the United States to go to war on China's behalf. I should also be opposed to the same suggestion made on behalf of loyalist Spain. My opposition to "collective security" is not on theoretical grounds but on practical ones. I believe it is imposible in the world as it exists today, for reasons too complicated to be set forth in this letter, reasons that have repeatedly been printed in the *New Republic.* I am sorry that Mr. Draper, making "a lawyer's case," sees fit to ignore these practical questions.

New York City. Bruce Bliven.

Mr. Draper Replies

To the New Masses:

MR. BLIVEN, in reply to a request for comment on "The Case Against Isolation," seems to hold that a democratic alliance against the fascist powers is an alliance for war. This leads to the conclusion: no democratic alliance, no war; in other words, peace is to be encouraged by discouraging resistance to aggression. On the contrary, the way to encourage peace is to discourage those who would make war, something that cannot be done without concerted action by those interested in keeping peace.

If, as the *New Republic* (May 12, 1937) has stated, "it is certain that the United States is in danger of becoming involved in any world war that may break out," then it becomes a matter of self-preservation for the United States to help keep war out of the world. Neutrality hinders the victim and helps the aggressor, thus creating the very conditions necessary for successful aggression. And every successful aggression breeds other aggressions, always for greater stakes. This is a matter of c[illegible]ce, not theory.

An examination of the *New Republic's* editorial policy in the past few months will show that isolation and neutrality have always been defended with exclusive reference to China, not Spain. There was a time when the *New Republic* lamented the unfair boycott of loyalist Spain by the non-intervention agreement. The war in China has driven all reference to this fraud out of the magazine. Is one not permitted to draw the obvious conclusion from these facts?

Mr. Bliven implies that my theoretical grounds were sound but not practical. His views are practical, but they lack theoretical grounds. Like so many others, he seeks to justify unsound theories by inventing a contradiction between theory and practice.

Theodore Draper.

On Conversion Endings

To the New Masses:

SINCE we continue to speak of "conversion" and the "conversion ending" (c.f. Hicks's review of *New Letters in America,* Taylor's review of *Father Malachy's Miracle*), it seems to me that we might profit by a critical examination of the implications of the term.

We all recognize, I suppose, that the word itself has been adopted from the field of religious experience; and perhaps, in accepting the term, we have accepted also too much that is, from our viewpoint, undesirable.

Religious conversion, however fortified by rationalization, is basically non-rational, emotional, frequently hysterical. Of course, a political "conversion" may also be purely emotional. One may "get communism," just as one may "get religion." But just as the religious convert is only too likely to backslide into a state of sin, or to be impelled by a sort of emotional momentum into an extreme of fanatical dogmatism, so the emotional convert to communism may very easily revert to his original state, or, more leftist than the Left, find an eventual haven in the fold of Trotskyism.

One cannot, obviously, deny that something analogous to conversion has taken place in the lives of most communists. Most of us (communists and sympathizers) were born into an environment, whether bourgeois or proletarian, in which bourgeois ideology was prevalent. And since we are now communists or sympathetic to communism, we must, plainly, have been "converted."

But how many of us can identify in memory the precise moment at which that "conversion" took place? It has been, I think, in almost every case, something which happened gradually, over a more or less extended period of time, progressing from the first doubts of bourgeois values toward communism. *Toward* communism, not *to* communism; for I believe that the best, the most faithful and sincere of party members are still in the process of *becoming* communists. Perhaps the word "process" is the key; religious conversion is a single, specific *event,* while conversion to communism is a continuing *process.*

Perhaps it is for the above reasons that the conversion theme is unsuitable for certain types of imaginative literature; there may be some justice in the bourgeois reviewers' complaint of which Alexander Taylor speaks—that "life doesn't work quite that way." The process of political conversion may be better suited to treatment in the novel, with its fairly large number of lesser climaxes occurring over an extended period of time, than it is to the drama, with its fewer and more intense crises. The political convert in Left drama has often been too much like the heavy father of old English comedy, who remained a dour old curmudgeon for four and a half acts, and became in the last ten minutes of the play a charming and indulgent parent—all for the sake of a happy ending.

John Loftus.

New York City.

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CONSUMERS UNION

Announces

Have there been any improvements in cars this year of importance to consumers?

What changes in gearshifting mechanisms have been made and of what importance are they?

Are the 1938 cars more economical to operate than the 1937 cars?

What changes in tuning have been made on the 1938 radios and how desirable are they? What other changes have been made and how important are they?

These and many similar questions are answered in the reports described below.

reports on 1938 AUTOS *and* 1938 RADIOS

Also in the current issue:

Electric Shavers

Will electric shavers give as close or as satisfactory a shave as ordinary safety razors? Do they irritate more or less? Are they worth the high price? Nine brands ranging in price from $7.50 to $17.50 were subjected to use tests and engineering examination and rated as "Best Buys," "Also Acceptable," and "Not Acceptable." Those who look forward to a shaver's paradise with an electric shaver should read this report before buying.

Cigars

No amount of cellophane, Xmas seals and red ribbons can disguise a bad cigar. This report, which rates 33 brands (including White Owl, Robert Burns, Cremo and Phillies) should be particularly welcomed by cigar-giving CU members.

Toys

No gift can cause the giver more anxiety than toys. At what age should electric trains be given? What kinds of toys do children get the most enjoyment and the most value out of and at what ages? Which types of toys should be avoided? Three reports in this issue answer these questions. The first, based on the recommendations of a director of a widely-known nursery school, tells which toys should be given to children between the ages of two to six; the second rates toy chemistry sets, and the third discusses dolls.

Lipsticks

More than 40 brands are rated in this report. Stains caused by some of these brands would not wash out in tests. Many brands were grossly over-priced—one brand showing a mark-up of 5000% over the cost of the ingredients. Another caused marked irritation. Several ten cent brands were rated "Best Buys."

Life Insurance

The second of a series of reports on life insurance—the first of which described briefly how the life insurance business operates. This report analyzes life insurance premiums. Future installments will give specific recommendations on types of contracts.

Baked Beans, etc.

Other reports in this issue give valuable buying advice on baked beans, canned salmon, and electric and mechanical toothbrushes.

Coming!

Reports on cigarettes, coffee, shoes, razor blades and other products. Also a series on housing and building materials.

To make sure of receiving the report described above fill in and mail the coupon at the right.

AUTOS Prices are up approximately 10% making technical guidance in buying more necessary than ever. A preliminary technical appraisal of the 1938 models by Consumers Union's automotive consultants appearing in the current (December) issue of *Consumers Union Reports* gives a summary of the important changes on each of more than 25 models (including the Ford, Chevrolet, Buick and Packard). The significance of each change is indicated. Trailers are also discussed. Read this report before buying *any* car! It will give you a basis for making a wise selection. A later issue will carry ratings of the 1938 cars by *name* as "Best Buys," "Also Acceptable," and "Not Acceptable."

RADIOS Prices are up in this field, too. In nearly every brand the buyer must pay more this year than he did last year for a radio capable of any given level of performance. A report, based on performance tests for such factors as tone quality, ability to get stations without interference, ability to pick up weak stations with satisfactory volume, general mechanical excellence, etc., rates the leading 1938 models as "Best Buys," "Also Acceptable," and "Not Acceptable." Five communications-type receivers for advanced amateurs are also compared.

OTHER REPORTS in the December issue give test results on leading brand of cigars, lipstick, electric shavers, toys, and other products. The report on life insurance is also continued. For a fuller description of these reports see the column at the left. To receive a copy of this issue fill in and mail the coupon below. The membership fee of $3 will bring you 12 issues of the *Reports* and, without extra charge, the 1938 Consumers Union Annual Buying Guide appearing early in 1938, which will give brand recommendations on over 1,500 products. You can start your membership with the current issue or with any of the previous issues listed below.

WHAT CONSUMERS UNION IS

Consumers Union of United States is a non-profit, membership organization established to conduct research and tests on consumers goods and to provide consumers with information which will permit them to buy their food, clothing, household supplies and other products most intelligently. Tests are conducted by expert staff technicians with the help of over 200 consultants in university, government and private laboratories. In most cases, comparisons of the quality of products are given in terms of brand names with ratings as "Best Buys," "Also Acceptable," and "Not Acceptable." Information is also given on labor conditions under which products are made. The sound, constructive advice on buying contained in *Consumers Union Reports* can help keep expenses down at the present time when living costs are going up.

Some of the Subjects Covered in Past Issues of the Reports

MAY—Trailers, Washing Machines, Moth Preventives, Constipation.

JUNE—Non-miniature Cameras, Radio Tubes, Sanitary Napkins.

JULY—Miniature Cameras, Gasolines, Golf Balls, Motor Oils.

AUG.-SEP.—Refrigerators, Films, Ice Cream, Inner Tubes.

OCT.—Oil Burners and Coal Stokers, Breakfast Cereals, Auto Radios.

NOV.—Life Insurance, Portable Typewriters, Men's Hats, Anti-Freezes.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Ralph Fox: Writer and Anti-Fascist Brigadier

RALPH FOX: A WRITER IN ARMS, *edited by John Lehmann, T. A. Jackson, and C. Day Lewis. International Publishers.* $1.75.

SHORTLY before he was killed by a murderous crossfire of fascist bullets in the olive groves near Cordoba, while waiting for the arrival of a British unit of the International Brigade, Ralph Fox wrote in a letter: "Hanging around makes me fed up." He was impatient for action—clear-headed, determined action. "For years," he wrote, "the liberal bourgeoisie has talked about a League of Nations army to impose peace on the world. Well, we have created the first international army to fight for peace and freedom."

Ralph Fox, the anti-fascist brigadier, and Ralph Fox, the writer, were not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they represent an adaptation of the writer and fighter to the situation of the greatest emergency. This is strongly evident in the twenty-seven excerpts from his widely varied writings; in the tributes penned for this volume by Harry Pollitt, Mike Gold, Sidney Webb, and Ralph Bates; and in the literary and political commentary by John Lehmann, T. A. Jackson, and Dona Torr, who respectively appraise his work as imaginative writer, political theorist, and literary critic. Some of the excerpts from his writings included in this volume will be familiar to many readers of the NEW MASSES, particularly those taken from his *Lenin: A Biography, The Colonial Policy of Great Britain, The Class Struggle in Great Britain,* and *The Novel and the People.* Many others were taken from his novels, narrative histories, and critical and creative pieces reprinted from English periodicals, and are thus made available to American readers for the first time.

John Lehmann comments on Fox's passionate love of the novel, his full appreciation of the English literary heritage "from Fielding to Lawrence," and declares of his creative writing:

> His imaginative grasp of characters and events was so striking, in all he wrote as well as in his conversation, that in time he might well, if he had given himself a chance among all his other activities, have written one or two of the finest revolutionary novels of our generation.

This is evident in the portions of his larger works, such as *People of the Steppes* and *Storming Heaven,* in the graphic sketch called "Conversation with a Lama," and the excerpt from an unfinished work, "They Hanged Frank Whittam." It is in this latter piece in particular that he bears out his own thesis that Marxism "consciously gives to man his full value, and in this sense is the most humanist of all world outlooks." "They Hanged Frank Whittam" combines Marxist humanism and creative ability. Here one discerns the broad sympathy and militant spirit that led him to fight in Spain. He was one with the people who suffered and fought. He admired challenge in the face of death. He was himself another Frank Whittam, who would risk all "to feed the hungry."

In similar spirit he reviewed a book by Charles Coster, *The Legend of Tyl Ulenspiegel,* in which he describes the merry, sensual, beer-loving Belgian rebel whose father was burned to death by the Spanish for heresy during the Flemish struggle for freedom. This hero is by no means in the whimsical tradition of Richard Strauss's tone poem, but is a man of the people, a product of struggle.

He brings the same zest and discovery to H. G. Wells, John Galsworthy—whose Fleur ran a canteen for scabs and longed for a British Mussolini—and to D. H. Lawrence and Henri Barbusse. He is merciless with J. H. Thomas, empire booster extraordinary.

T. A. Jackson writes of Fox:

> Ralph Fox showed an ability to break away from the two besetting sins of British Marxist writers—the substitution of a party jargon for living English; and its concomitant: the substitution of fossilized and frozen concepts for real thinking. Even before he had met with Engels's grim protest—"to many of our comrades the materialist conception of history is an excuse for not studying history"—Ralph Fox had shown eagerness to adventure into and explore phrases and aspects of Marxism. . . .

It was for this reason that Fox was able, in his *Ghengis Khan,* to bring an immense tract of history within the scope of Marxist comprehension.

But concerned as Ralph Fox was with a correct and vital revealing of the past, he was much more vitally concerned with the present and the making of history. He felt deeply, echoing Wordsworth, about writers whose fear of life lead them "to keep out of the community of humanity." He wanted them, as writers, to face the realities of their time. For himself there was a further step: he laid aside his pen in order to act most effectively against the crossfire being directed by international fascism *and fascism concealed within democratic countries* against freedom and democracy. He went to the focal point of conflict, Spain. The writer took up arms. Shortly before he died, he wrote:

> . . . The very fact of resistance has wakened up the democratic forces, encouraged them, and weakened the enemy to an extent we don't quite yet realize. So however hard one's work may be, and exasperating, we do feel that it counts, is history, and must be effective. When this job is over, life will be easier for everyone.

Ralph Fox, the brigadier, bearing arms against the fascists and running crouched into a bullet-swept area to organize a quick maneuver that would give machine-gunners an excellent position against the enemy flank, had the same directness in battle that he had in his writings. He made valuable contributions to the literature of communism, theoretical, historical, creative, and critical. He was one of those anti-fascists who could, because of his warm, vital interest in life and people, rise to the heights of the tasks of our time. He had a supreme goal—world communism—but he never allowed his "distant perfection" to obscure the immediate enemy, the present difficulties. He was a Communist, but never a sectarian. He was a historian, but one who fused scientific investigation with sensitivity for the full scope of life and living. He was a man of action who brought intimate cultural and political understanding to his activity. He died for his beliefs.

HARRY CARLISLE.

Ideas That Made Modern Literature

FROM THESE ROOTS, *by Mary M. Colum. Charles Scribner's Sons.* $2.50.

MARY COLUM'S analysis of "the ideas that have made modern literature" is based on a sensitive appreciation of the importance of literary criticism in the general stream of thought. Her interests, however, are limited. Among the critics she confines herself to Lessing, Herder, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Madame de Staël, Saint-Beuve, and Taine. There is not a word about Prosper de Barante, Georg Brandes, Franz Mehring, or Georg Plekhanov. These omissions distort her picture. Indeed, by the middle of the book Miss Colum abandons her study of basic critical ideas altogether and embarks upon a critical narrative of her own dealing with modern fiction and poetry from Balzac to T. S. Eliot. The assumption seems to be that western critical thought completely exhausted itself with the great bourgeois critics who came upon the heels of the French revolution; after Taine one need only describe the effect of their ideas upon the creative writers of the last hundred years.

Even within this limited sphere, the author cramps her vision by a preconception derived from the ideas she set out to analyze. Critic and poet alike are torn out of their social context. The bourgeois revolution is mentioned as a vague background, never integrated with the development of that literature which it mothered. Ideas appear to move from writer to writer in a social vacuum, sacred mysteries handed down within a priestly caste. A genius like Lessing or Madame de Staël or Taine arises to spin new ideas out of the inner consciousness, to influence profoundly the work of generations of writers after them, but

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never with direct reference to the gigantic social struggles amid which these men and women live, of which they are a part, which throws them into an ecstasy of hope for the future of mankind or depths of despair for their own present lot.

This failure to relate literary to social change with telling detail leads to some bizarre conclusions. The ideas of Marx and Engels on literature are wholly ignored; the last word on this subject is given to Hegel; yet Marxist criticism in America is identified with the values of Madame de Staël. Similarly, no mention is made of the extraordinary fact that Pushkin, Tolstoi, and Shakespeare sell by the millions in the Soviet Union, yet Lenin is accused of "invincible ignorance as to the nature of literature" because he said that literature must become part of the general proletarian movement.

Such fantastic assertions are the direct result of evading the essential problem in hand. One can make them only if one refuses to break down into its original components the basic concepts inherited from the bourgeois revolution, and by discarding those which are no longer valid. A work of art, Miss Colum argues, may be totally incomprehensible to the Irving Babbits and Lenins and Rockefellers, and entirely comprehensible to an itinerant umbrella-mender or a fiddler or a flute-player, or a peasant who has had leisure and strength to cultivate his emotions and spiritual forces. Art is and always has been the property of those who create it and of those who understand it, and they, no matter how unpalatable the statement may be to literal believers in democratic or communistic dogmas, are a minority in every state and in every class. Now against this belief there is the ineluctable fact that millions of Soviet citizens, once illiterate, today passionately follow literature and the arts. But to grasp the implications of Miss Colum's assertion, one must go back to the very material which she stroked on the surface but refused to trace to its roots. Her failure to include Brandes and Plekhanov, her misunderstanding of Lenin and of Marxist criticism reflect a common prejudice among certain American writers. This preconception saturates Miss Colum's approach to her material and traces its descent unconsciously from the romantic schools which preceded and followed the French revolution. These developed the specific cult of the ego which has conditioned so much of the literature of the past fifty years; they set up the artist against the merchant, the lawyer, the bureaucrat, and the military chieftain as nature's noblest product.

Now this is precisely the idea which needs to be analyzed; in this case, however, it is merely the idea which our historian assumes. If you assume it uncritically you cannot go much beyond Goethe's *Werther* or Chateaubriand's *René;* you get caught in the roots of modern literature without understanding its fruits. If you stop with Taine, you are bound to omit, as Miss Colum has omitted, not only the influence of Marxist ideas upon western literature in the past eighty years but even such obvious factors as the influence of Darwin, and the development of modern science. Surely Madame de Staël's ideas have shaped our literature; but so have the invention of printing, the spread of literacy and education, the growth of the newspaper, the invention of the movie and the radio, the popularization of the idea that man can conquer nature through science, and the growing belief that he can direct his own historic destiny toward a higher form of society and civilization.

JOSEPH FREEMAN.

Social Changes and Theater Technique

THE THEATER IN A CHANGING WORLD, *by Thomas H. Dickinson and Others. Henry Holt.* $5.

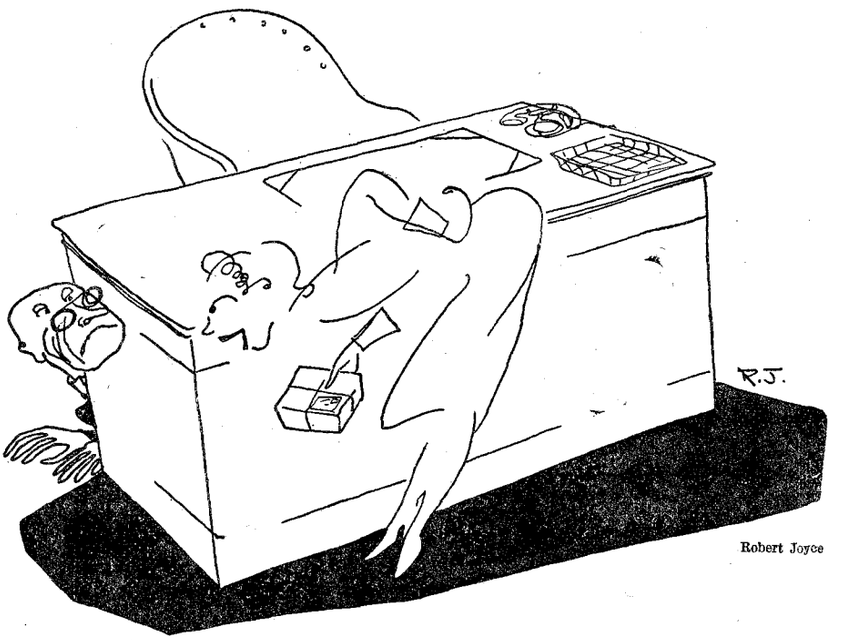
MR. DICKINSON has long been known as a writer of textbooks on the modern drama and as editor of several collections of contemporary plays. In the present volume he has brought together a series of articles on the post-war theaters of fourteen European countries.

Mr. Dickinson's introductory survey is the most important single contribution to the volume. Starting with a broad knowledge of the theatrical arts and with a recognition that "social principles can never be dissociated from principles of art," he clarifies the influence of social changes upon the technique of the theater. Many of the confusions of post-war experiments are cut through by Mr. Dickinson's analysis, and out of the welter of false starts, the manifestos of cults, and the gropings of sincere theater workers, we see the reëmergence of the art into a position of importance in the life of the people. This survey is valuable for its redefinitions, as the whole book is useful for its presentation of facts not readily available in English.

In some of the longer articles there is a lack of critical interpretation. Edmond See's article on the French theater is merely an enumeration of playwrights and their work with no explanation of their differing values, nor of the reason why "the public, weary of so many ephemeral works, continues to flock" to the satirical, social theater of Jules Romains. Enrique Diez-Canedo's article merely notes Garcia Lorca's birth and death, and does not even suggest that King Alfonso was driven out of Spain or that anything else has happened there that might possibly affect art.

Julius Bab expresses pride in the fact that as one of the leaders of the people's-theater movement in Germany, he was in no way involved in the class struggle (from which that theater derived its meaning and vitality until the Nazi invasion). To Bab it is merely of "sensational importance" that one of the finest German emigré theaters, the Schauspielhaus in Zurich, "sought incidentally to stage plays with a political bias by authors like Toller and Friedrich Wolff, who set out with haste to represent German conditions." Bab excuses his own lack of haste to represent German conditions today on the ground that "the whole development is much too young to allow for a conclusive judgment."

In the article on Italy there is also strong, though probably unintended, proof of Dickinson's recognition that because of the fascist fear of anything that may excite a man's imagination and thereby "awaken him to an increased respect for himself as a man," the theater can take only a negative part in the fascist state. The author, Silvio D'Amico, is a professor of dramatic art in Rome and is probably in no position to withhold admira-



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tion from Mussolini, but it leads him into the embarrassing necessity of interpreting the oracular words of the Duce himself about the theater, at the same time that he must admit that "the Italian theater is [still] waiting for its Mussolini" to save it. It is not difficult to see why "lately the Italian public has been somewhat interested in the problems of moral sensuality," or why Pirandello's metaphysical sleight-of-hand has been an inspiration in the anti-intellectual atmosphere of fascist Italy, for as D'Amico says of the plays of the academician Bontempelli, in the "harsh atmosphere there appear exotic flowerings, exactly at the moments when it would be dangerous to allow the spectator to reflect too much."

It is worthwhile emphasizing again, as do the articles by Joseph Gregor and H. W. L. Dana, that one must turn to the Soviet theater for unexampled artistic supremacy and for constant progress in developing good drama for the whole population. Gregor's own evidence, however, belies his somewhat dated criticism that the Russian theater must reject "the empty formalism of slogans [and] endow itself with the life of a people"; a criticism which is inconsistent with Dana's more up-to-date conclusion that "many of the playwrights who started out as pure propagandists have come to realize that even in order to be good propaganda a play in Russia must be good art. The new audience in the Soviet Union has become so accustomed to excellence that only good art is good propaganda." BORIS GAMZUE.

Albert Parsons: Haymarket Martyr

LABOR AGITATOR, THE STORY OF ALBERT PARSONS, *by Alan Calmer. International Publishers.* 35c.

THE courageous lives of America's early labor leaders have too long been coffined in historical vaults. As a result, it has been comparatively easy for reaction to use the schools to create ugly myths regarding labor's heroes. It has been easy, too, for the American people, unfamiliar with their rich heritage of struggle, to fall prey to illusions and to repeat mistakes which the existence of a living heritage might have ruled out. Enthusiastic welcome, therefore, to Alan Calmer's vivid little biography of the Haymarket martyr, Albert Parsons, sections of which have already appeared in the NEW MASSES [November 17, 1937].

Parsons's experience merged when he was twenty-nine with the history of the labor movement. Fired from a typesetter's job on the Chicago *Times* during the railroad uprising of 1877 and blacklisted by the trade, he was quickly drawn into the leadership of the Workingmen's Party. In the ten years that remained for him, he established himself as one of the ablest organizers and orators of the time.

The ten years were critical years for the labor movement. In 1877, as a result of the bloody suppression of the strike movement, the Socialistic Labor Party, formerly the Workingmen's Party, turned to independent political action. Securing the support of trade unions, largely through the efforts of Parsons, it succeeded in electing an alderman. Victory now followed victory until in 1880 theoretical differences were crystallized in a split. Disillusioned by the ballot-stealing defeat of some of their candidates (violence versus the ballot became an issue) and angered by the party's endorsement of Greenback candidates in the national election, a group seceded and organized the Social Revolutionaries' Club. Although his experience in trade-union activity had helped Parsons to avoid the false dilemma of political versus economic action, he went with the secessionists. His influence was salutary. Together with August Spies he helped the Chicago section of what in 1883 became known as the International Working People's Association avoid the sectarianism of other anarchist groups in the country. "Principles of anarchism, socialism, and equalitarianism were hopelessly entangled in his mind," Calmer tells us, but Parsons insisted on the value of participating in elections as a practical means of bringing ideas to the masses and avoiding the leftism of a Johann Most, who opposed the struggle for immediate demands as a compromise with capitalism.

From 1884 events moved apace. A national trade-union body, which later became known as the A. F. of L., met in Chicago and adopted a resolution "that eight hours shall constitute a legal day's labor from and after May 1, 1886." The May Day celebration of that year was gigantic. It was immediately followed by lockouts. On May 3, the massacre of workers occurred outside the McCormick Reaper plant. The following day, a protest meeting was held in Haymarket Square. Parsons and Spies were the main speakers. As the meeting was breaking up at the behest of the police, a bomb was thrown into the crowd and a policeman was killed.

At the time the bomb exploded, Parsons and Fischer were in Zepf's saloon across the Square. Engel, a third defendant, was at home. Spies was just getting off the speaker's platform. But these and others were brought to trial. Parsons, who had been persuaded by friends to leave Chicago immediately after the explosion, voluntarily returned to stand trial with his comrades. The press clamored for their lives. A prejudiced jury was selected with the assistance of Judge Gary. "These defendants," said the prosecuting attorney, "are no more guilty than the thousands who follow them. They are picked because they are the leaders. Convict them, and our society is safe." Safe from the eight-hour day?

The verdict was a foregone conclusion. Intellectuals of two continents and the entire labor movement protested. But the four were hanged on the morning of November 11, 1887. Parsons began to speak as the hood

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was placed over his head. As the trap was sprung, his voice rose: "O men of America, let the voice of the people be heard. . . ."

Calmer's account of Parson's life is by turns factual, analytic, and dramatic. One acquires a sense of the man; something of the color and vigor of the period's labor demonstrations; detailed information regarding the Haymarket affair; and insight into the problems and controversies that troubled the labor movement of the seventies and eighties. The labor movement today greatly needs popular biographies and histories such as *Labor Agitator*. Millions of new workers, unfamiliar with labor's traditions, are pouring into the labor movement. Here is a task for scholars and writers anxious to use their special talents in behalf of labor.

ARNOLD SHUKOTOFF.

The Sculptor In Society

RODIN, *by Judith Cladel. Harcourt, Brace & Co.* $3.75.

CONCEPTIONS of sculptural form and the technical methods of achieving it have undergone much change since Rodin's time. We do not admire late Greek and Renaissance figures to the degree that he did. His humanly expressive qualities do not make up entirely for certain deficiencies in structure. The old treatment of the subject as front, rear, and two profiles, rather than in the round, is alien to the modern sculptor, to whom the discovery of Negro sculpture was a liberation.

Rodin worked almost always in clay, modeling the figure which was later to be cast in bronze or carved in stone by professional craftsmen. Most moderns work directly on the stone, wood, plaster, or even metal—in a foundry, with machine tools—and believe that this gives them a much more vital relation of form to material.

One should not imagine from this, however, that Rodin's revolution in sculpture, his telling assault on academicism, was not infinitely valuable to the artists. Some think his genius, built up by years of exhausting study, is best revealed in the thousands of amazing drawings and water colors which were almost routine practice for him. If his work does not seem as advanced as the painting of his time, it is because the tradition of sculpture was so retarded. No one could have accomplished more than he.

Mlle. Cladel's book scarcely deals with the technical aspects of Rodin's work. As his former secretary and devoted friend, she is more concerned with its effects on the people, the intellectuals, the bourgeoisie, politicians, and art and government officials of his time. Though the style of the book is a little too old-fashioned-noble, we get an appalling picture of the vileness of "society," of official insolence, cupidity, and viciousness. From the day that Rodin was refused entrance to the

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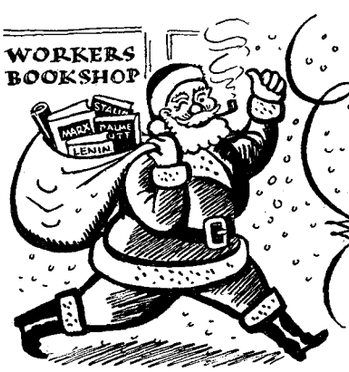

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Grande Ecole de Beaux-Arts, to his death on November 17, 1917, and even afterward, at his grave, the "respectable people" squabbled over his statues, tried to corrupt and embitter his mind and to break up his home. They resorted to the lowest forms of chicanery and larceny to pull something out of the grab-bag which his life work had become. In his youth they made capital of his inexperience; in his last years they profited by his dotage. If anyone thinks a work of art cannot possibly become a mere commodity, let him read Rodin's life. Here he will see how the artist himself becomes a commodity.

There was some brightness in all this, however. While the art committees were refusing his statues and the government was hesitating for years to accept even as a gift the monuments of one of her greatest men, the noblest intellects of France gathered to his defense. It is significant that in the dispute over his Balzac statue, rejected by the Societé des Gens de Lettres, the line-up for and against Rodin almost exactly paralleled the line-up of the Dreyfusards and the reactionaries (a fact which disturbed Rodin who was as politically minded as a lamb in pasture). Among those who "did not understand the statue" were fascist Charles Maurras and politician Poincaré. With those who honored themselves defending it were Zola, Anatole France, Maillol, Bourdelle, Toulouse-Lautrec, Monet, Sisley, Signac, Besnard, Carrière, Vincent d'Indy, Debussy, Paul Fort, Louys, de Regnier, Paul Adam, and Mallarmé. The tradition of the united front is not new to French intellectuals. When they are ready to sweep away the filth which aptly calls itself the upper crust of French society, they will remember the insults which they were continually made to bear, and how in past times they fought so well to establish the dignity of the human mind.

CLARENCE WEINSTOCK.

Radio Censorship and Democracy

IS AMERICAN RADIO DEMOCRATIC? *by S. E. Frost, Jr. University of Chicago Press.* $2.50.

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lute dictators as to station policy and practice." And this, despite the fact that they are subject to certain "regulatory" provisions. It is the owners who are "permitted to determine upon standards of 'good' broadcasting and to demand that all material presented before their microphones comply with such standards. These standards are, to a large degree, expressions of interests, ideals, prejudices, and concerns of station owners. In terms of these the station owner can and does censor program material with practically complete immunity."

Radio in this country, the author declares, "in fact, if not in theory, is built around" the advertising industry. "Programs are designed almost wholly to meet the needs of advertisers."

The United States does not have a "democritically administered radio" today, Dr. Frost charges. His final conclusion, is, I think worth quoting at some length.

> Where the dominant motive is, as in the United States, private profit, the radio is employed, despite its many services in "public interest, convenience, or necessity," to create individuals such as will serve the interests of those seeking such profit. . . . A democratic radio must make private profit subordinate to the interests and welfare of the public it serves. To effect this, radio must be controlled by the people.

No "radical" critic of radio broadcasting under the present set-up could have stated the fundamental problem of radio more concisely.

The book by Dr. Frost, who is an associate of the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education and assistant professor of education at Adelphi College, is a valuable contribution to the critical literature on the subject.

HY KRAVIF.

★

Recently Recommended Books

The Civil War in the United States, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. International. $2.50.

C.I.O., Industrial Unionism in Action, by J. Raymond Walsh. Norton. $2.50.

Engels on Capital, translated and edited by Leonard E. Mins. International. $1.25.

Volunteer in Spain, by John Sommerfield. Knopf. $1.50.

Counter-Attack in Spain, by Ramon Sender. Houghton Mifflin. $3.

From Spanish Trenches, edited by Marcel Acier. Modern Age. 35c.

When Labor Organizes, by Robert R. Brooks. Yale University Press. $3.

The Writer in a Changing World, edited by Henry Hart. Equinox. $2.

Socialized Medicine in the Soviet Union, by Henry E. Sigerist. Norton. $3.50.

The Romance of Russian Medicine, by Michael L. Ravitch. Liveright. $3.

Russian Medicine, by W. Horsley Gantt. Harper. $2.50.

To Have and Have Not, by Ernest Hemingway. Scribner's. $250.

The Trial, by Franz Kafka. Knopf. $2.50.

The Chute, by Albert Halper. Viking. $2.50.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Irwin Shaw's "Siege" Lets Us Down

IRWIN SHAW'S *Siege* represents a pretty shameful let-down from the high ambition of *Bury the Dead*. The flaming playwright of that impassioned anti-war drama has become lazy and ineffectual in his latest effort, a "neutral" treatment of the Spanish civil war. Faced with an issue which is definite to the man in the street, he has chosen an oblique and unreal approach, expressing himself in terms of human beings involved in a war—not any particular war. Apparently his comet career has gone to his head and softened by flattery, and Hollywood and local subsidizing, he has made a temporary (to be hoped) retrogression. Success has been too easy for the Shaw who followed *Bury the Dead* with an unproduced script about how a Red scare can be developed by the reactionary press, and who then wrote a football picture for the film industry. Once this youngster knew what was going on in the world, but he has either forgotten or deliberately chosen to ignore the political values known to anyone who cares to read the papers or who listens to the conversation of informed citizens. There is no character in *Siege* who gives any indication of knowing what the war is about.

Shaw's approach to the problem is to treat [illegible]e as human beings who fight only be[illegible]y must. In a war which is one of the most political ever waged, one which has a crystal clear premise, the author has his characters mumble that they fight for everything except political reasons. A possible theme for a treatment somewhat like Mr. Shaw's attempt, would be to present people's small troubles as a sort of counterpoint to the larger issue of the Spanish people versus fascism, but Shaw chooses to ignore the larger point altogether.

The result of this avoidance of political values is that *Siege* appears not to be about anything. It's echoing flatulence was apparent to the most confused of the bourgeois critics who condemned the play to an early death. After four performances it was carted off to the warehouse.

It is to be hoped that the Shaw of the sincerity, vehemence, and power of *Bury the Dead* will take thought about himself after the reception of *Siege*. He has pungent things to say and has shown so clearly his abilities to write in the correct direction that it would be a distinct loss for him to be discouraged into silence.

The setting of *Siege* is an old Moorish fortress in which are trapped a band of loyalists. The producer, Norman Bel Geddes, saw fit to use a revolving stage upon which was mounted [illegible]iderous, solid heap of rubble, stones, guns, [illegible]roken arches. This mass moved back and forth at such frequent intervals that it seemed as if the producer was delighted with his monstrous mechanical contrivance. Incidentally, a shell registered a direct hit at one point in the dialogue and everything went black. But when the curtain rose again the arches were still in place. The whole show had that air of trickery.

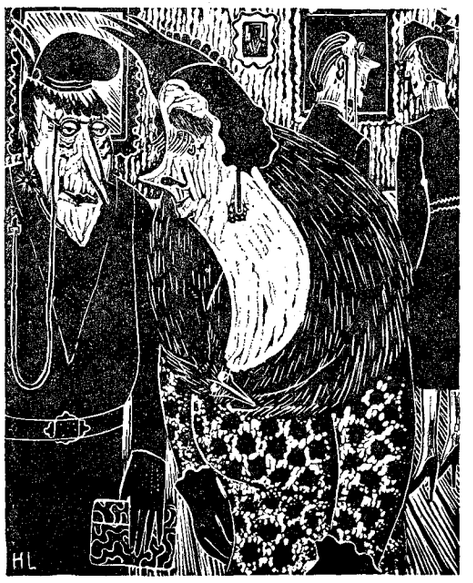
Mr. Shaw coops up in his fortress a bull fighter, a pacifist, and a "Communist" worker. They all talk, and the bull fighter makes conversational and other passes at the wife of the pacifist. In the end when all are hungry and despairing, the pacifist becomes militant to the extent of shooting the bull fighter whose delirious babblings have begun to demoralize the remaining soldiers.

The author's uncertainties about what he is thinking, or rather his clumsy attempts to say something he really cannot believe, have been reflected in every department of his play. Construction doesn't exist, and the dialogue is preposterously bad. It is fumbling of the worst sort. As hinted above, no one cared for the work except perhaps Mr. Bel Geddes who has never demonstrated any theater intelligence anyway. The best thing Mr. Shaw can do is to leave the architectural genius and mull over his relation to the theater. He has too much to say and a first-rate talent for expression.

If you want to know about the actors, be assured that they were innocent people, who couldn't help it if no one knew what to tell them to do. They certainly didn't look like Spaniards, act like Spaniards, or remind you of Spaniards. The director apparently simply took care to see that only one spoke at once. As for the producer, he will never get over the fact that the script is generally written before the scenery can be built.

The only excitement afforded this correspondent during the week was a second trip to Marc Blitzstein's magnificent operetta, *The Cradle Will Rock*, at the Mercury Theatre, N. Y. It will be performed again this Sunday night, December 19, and is soon to be given a production of eight performances a week at the hands of a regular commercial manager.

JACK BURROWS.



Helen Ludwig

Retrospect and Forecast

THE annual pre-Christmas season brings with it the usual slump in motion pictures. Within the past few weeks there has been nothing first rate released. The high point was reached with M.G.M.'s *The Last Gangster* which, at its best, is second-rate film fare. It is essentially a male version of *Stella Dallas*. A hard-boiled racketeer (Edward G. Robinson) gets put away for a ten-year term on the good old income-tax charge. He turns soft and sacrifices his life for his son, who during the jail sentence had acquired a new father and a respectable life.

If you insist on going to movies, you'd better stick to the older product. If you go to the first-run palaces, you'll find tripe like *45 Fathers* (20th Century-Fox) in which Jane Withers is still trying to be cute, or *Dinner at the Ritz* (New World—made in England) on which I am unable to report in great detail for the simple reason that it is so inexpertly recorded, directed, and acted that it is impossible to follow the story or understand what is being said.

Maybe this lack of good productions is a producers' trick to allow critics enough leisure to consider and choose the ten best pictures of the year. I don't know if I could pick the ten best pictures, but there should certainly be no difficulty in finding some. Hollywood gave us a few films which are not to be sneezed at. The Soviet Union reached a new peak with *Baltic Deputy* and gave us a memorable film in *The Return of Maxim*. But what is most encouraging was the emergence of Frontier Films with their two extraordinary documentaries *Heart of Spain* and *China Strikes Back*.

The future looks bright, too. Not only for the films Frontier now has in production (a short on the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee and a film based on the findings of the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee), not only for foreign film field (especially Amkino's *Peter the First* which opens in twenty-four cities on December 24), not only because the government through its Farm Security Administration has given us another beautiful and stirring documentary in *The River* (which will shortly be reviewed in these pages), but also because of certain productions being contemplated in Hollywood.

The one that excites me most is the announcement from Grand National that James

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Cagney's next vehicle is to be a film written and directed by Rowland Brown with the wonderful title, *Angels with Dirty Faces*. I don't know what the story is about, but the Cagney-Brown combination is exciting. Brown, about whom very little is known, is as far as I'm concerned one of the finest directors working in Hollywood. His first film, *Quick Millions*, is the finest gangster film that has been made. He made next, for Darryl Zanuck, an extraordinary study of bail-bondsmen called *Blood Money*. Despite Zanuck's mutilation, the fresh and dynamic qualities of the film came through. Since then he hasn't been on good terms with the Hollywood producers, having walked out of several productions. Of course, I may be wrong, but if the Cagney-Brown partnership holds together, we can expect many exciting things.

PETER ELLIS.

Phonograph Records: A Christmas Crop

THE land-office business in records at this season last year may not be matched in 1937, but it won't be the fault of the manufacturers: never have they turned out so many releases nor, on the whole, such interesting and significant material. In addition to the regular December issues and a Victor special list of repressed European H.M.V. recordings, now on sale, the January releases have been speeded up to appear around December 15. There are so many items in all that I shall cover the highlights only in a condensed list of recommendations (plus a few black sheep to avoid).

Bach. The best bets are the A-major piano concerto by Edwin Fischer (Victor set 368), thirteen chorale-preludes by Dr. Schweitzer (Columbia Bach Organ Society, Vol. II), and three flute sonatas by Barrère (Victor Set 406). The best-seller will be a new album of Stokowski transcriptions (Victor set 401), but those who prefer Bach straight to Bach in Hollywood grease-paint are given due warning. And avoid the Motet "Sing Ye to the Lord" (Victor 1845 and 14613) like poison. The best gifts albums are still the older issues of the complete Brandenburg concertos and *The Art of Fugue* (Columbia sets 249-50 and 206).

Beethoven. Good: first piano concerto by Gieseking (Columbia set 308); great: Opus 131, string quartet by the Busch foursome (Victor set 369). I don't care much for Schnabel's version of the "Hammerclavier" Sonata (Victor set 403). For the symphonies (no new releases) you can't go wrong with the Weingartner Columbia series, although Toscanini's high-voltage version of the seventh (Victor) is hard to resist.

Bloch. Gamut achieves a scoop with the first recording of the savage violin sonata played by Harold and Marion Kahn Berkley (set 3).

Brahms. Beecham's "Tragic" overture (Columbia set X85), but not the Kreisler violin concerto (Victor set 402) unless you're a more avid Kreislerian than I am. Bruno

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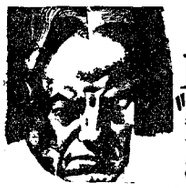

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Walter's fourth symphony (Victor set 242) is still one of the best choices.

Cambini. The name is unfamiliar, but this composer's string quartet (Victor set 376) is one of the most attractive chamber works you can find on disks.

Moussorgsky. Gamut again with nine great songs, including the "Sunless" cycle, Moshe Rudinow of Temple Emanu-El (set 4). Incidentally, Decca is repressing (on dollar records) the Society Album of Vladimir Rosing's remarkable if over-dramatic interpretations of fourteen other songs.

Mozart. It's hard to go wrong here and hard to know when to stop. First choices, however, are the piano concerto, K. 450, by Elly Ney in Victor set 365 (which I much prefer to Schnabel's version of the K. 439 concerto on Victor set 389); Kathleen Long's debut on Musicraft disks in the *Variations on a Theme by Gluck,* plus an odd minuet and gigue for good measure (105½); the K. 428 string quartet by the Pro Arte group (Victor set 375); and of course the new and just about perfect version of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* by Bruno Walter (Victor set 364). Decca is repressing the first volume of the Violin Sonata Society played by Krauss and Goldberg—a revelation in Mozartian performances.

Schubert. The posthumous B-flat piano sonata played by Ernst Victor Wolff (Columbia set 311).

Shostakovich. Two pieces for string octet conducted by Goberman, another unusual Timely Record Co. release (1300).

Sibelius. The Society Vol. 2 has just been added to the Victor repressings of the Sibelius series (set 394) and the inclusion of the superb seventh symphony by Koussevitsky makes it a "must" for every Sibelian, despite the awkward side-breaks and Kajanus's somewhat prosaic reading of the delightful—and unfamiliar—third symphony.

ROY GREGG.

A Colossus of a Dance Affair

UP and around Radio City in New York the Dance International is creating a bit of dance history. More than fifteen thousand people at this writing, have taken that ride up the escalator dominated by Bouchard's picture of a suspended-in-the-air Tamiris to get tangled up in the most hectic exhibitions of paintings, sculpture, photographs, costumes, sets, etc., on the dance that your reviewer has ever seen. And these same thousands have sat in for its moving pictures, listened to its lectures; and I don't know how many have had the $2.50 to sit in the Rainbow Room, sixty-five stories up in the air, to see the folk dancing and the demonstrations of dance techniques that have taken place three times a week for the past three weeks. The Center Theatre was jammed for the all-ballet performance; and the all-modern performance is yet to come. This colossus of a dance affair, is indicating

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that there's an even larger and more enthusiastic dance audience in New York, in the whole country, than was even optimistically ever expected.

Beyond the numbers, there is nothing startling to report, as yet. It might be noted, however, that there was a stirring Soviet film that drew the most spontaneous and hearty applause from the movie audiences. In contrast to the melodramatic Italian and the romantic and depressing German films, there was a freshness and exhilaration about the Soviet dancers and gymnasts from the Khirgiz to the Little Russian that was infectious.

For those of us who had begun to worry about the lack of dance on the federal front, the W.P.A. Dance Theater will open next Tuesday at the 49th Street Theatre with last year's smash hit, Tamiris's *How Long Brethren?* suite of Negro songs of protest, and four of her earlier Negro spirituals. Also, beginning December 23, at the same theater, Nadia Chilkovsky, Lily Mehlman, and Roger Pryor Dodge, three W.P.A. dancers, are scheduled for a run of joint afternoon concerts.

What a lot of people want to know is why the most brilliant of our younger dancers, Anna Sokolow, isn't doing choreography for the W.P.A.? OWEN BURKE.

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Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

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Epic of America. The W.P.A. Radio Federal Theater dramatizes a chapter of James Truslow Adams's book of the same name, Sun., Dec. 19, 8 p.m., Mutual.

Town Meeting of the Air. Prominent speakers discuss the system of medical care we should have, Thurs., Dec. 23, 9:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

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Julius Caesar (Mercury, N. Y.). Orson Welles's production of the Shakespearean play in modern clothes and with fascist overtones is one of the highlights of the current season.

Golden Boy (Belasco, N. Y.). Clifford Odets's new play of a prizefighter is rich in social implications and still a story that grips for its own sake.

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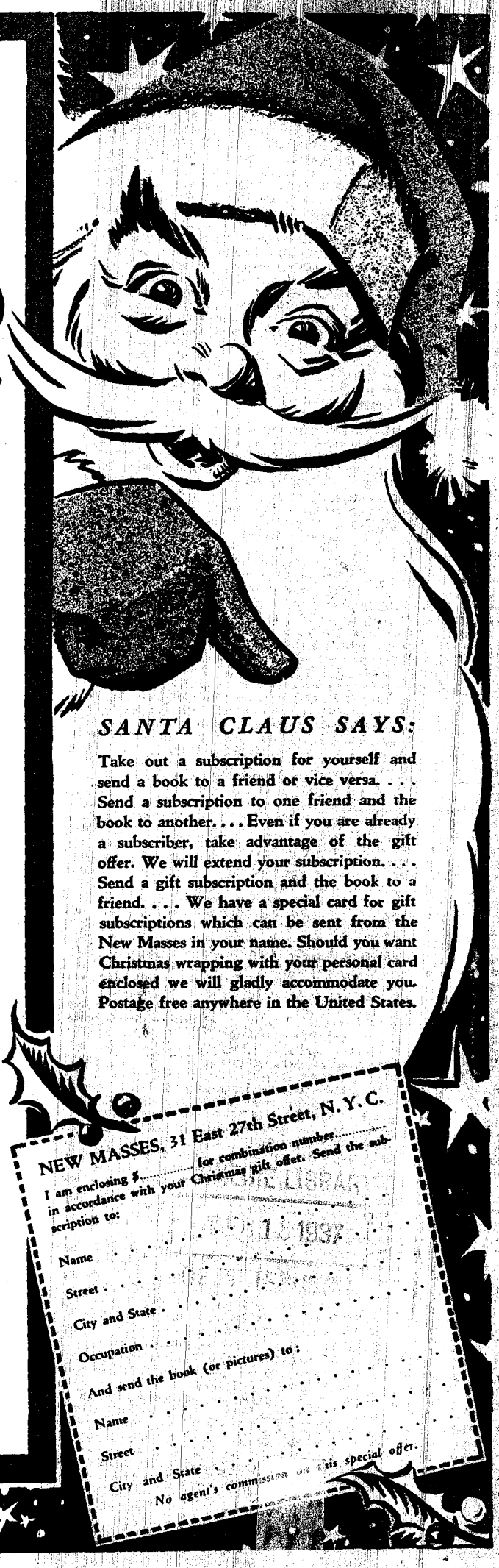

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